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THE
Virtue, Honour and Ingenuity,
OF
RETRACTING
AN R 3365
ERROR:
AND R 766

The *Invalidity* of pretended **CONSTANCY**
of **HONESTY**; and of all other *Excuses*
for Delaying it.

WITH
Some sure *Signs*, and ill *Effects*
of **OBSTINACY**.

By **ELISHA SMITH, M. A.**
Lecturer of *Wisbech* in the *Isle of Ely*. K

THE SECOND EDITION.

Humanum est Errare.

The shortest Folly is always the best.

The Last Error worse than the First.

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(Price 1 s.)

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THE
Virtue, Honour and Ingenuity,
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Have search'd for all Extenuations and Abatements, to gratify my own Candor, towards the Erroneous Opinions and Practices of some, otherwise Good and well-meaning People, and can resolve them into nothing, so generally as *Mistake* and *Inadvertency*. Whoever is disposed to take the Benefit of the best Excuse, in Imitation of the greatest Examples, instead of upbraiding, I profess myself ready to turn their Advocate. The ensuing Pages have no such haughty Aim, as to pretend to gain a Victory over any Man's Person; but over his Incogitancy and Mistake, they are very humbly and earnestly solicitous. And, What Reader may I not modestly hope to prevail with, to acknowledge the One, and quit the Other? If I demonstrate his doing so, to be a supremely Rational, Ingenuous and Religious, Action; and, with other Ad-

vantages, must derive upon him the Esteem and Praises of all the Wise and Virtuous.

THIS excellent, easy Virtue, would certainly come more into Fashion, where there are Disburs and Differences, if it was not brow-beaten and suppress'd, by false Notions of the Honour of *Constancy* and *Steadfastness* to One's Opinion; and of the Disreputation of being a *Turn-coat*, or mistaken. I believe every-body will agree with me, That this is, now, the most Universal Cause, why Men continue so long, or altogether in detected Mistake: They confirm themselves, almost to a Man, to be still what they were, because they think one and the same Thought, *That they can't come off from it with Honour*: The Error following from that, is, to judge it to no Purpose to be made sensible of One; where the Mind decrees not to own, it determines of Course not to perceive it. Thus it defies the Access of Conviction in many, and turns it out of Doors when got in, in others. Such is the Honour, such the Temper which keep up *Party*; nor is there any thing else to supply it with vital Spirits.

THERE is undoubtedly, a Difference between being in an Error or Inadvertency, and an assumed Purpose never to relinquish them; the not being convinc'd they are such, and resolving not to be so.

TO this last abounding Disposition of Mind, I address the following Sheets, to induce it to quit that base desperate Resolution, from the Sense of Virtue; the bounden Respect to Truth, together with the Ease of finding it: The indisputable Sentiments of Honour and Glory, and Characteristicks of good Sense; by removing every tenacious Hindrance, and bewailing the sad Effects of Obstinacy. There can be no Dispute about the Mistake, when it is evidently shewn to deviate from *Holy Scripture*, *Fact* and *Experience*, the impartial Standards of Truth, and Regulators of our Judgment; and shewn in the Spirit of Friendship and Meekness too, which is the true Spirit and Temper of the Gospel; the Spirit and Energy of Perswasion moreover. I design no greater Uneasiness to any body, than the Beauty of farther Light

Light and Honour, which will appear, as I hope, in opening this new Door of Consideration.

TIS a Fallacy to think, That every one who differs from another in Opinion, must necessarily set up for Superiority of Judgment and Learning. The Arrogance of believing One's own Eyes before others, and yielding to clearer Evidence rather than obscure, is easy to be forgiven: At the same Time he offers his Reasons and Arguments to others, who won't be convinc'd (as they say) by *Arms*, but by *Arguments*; he desires not, expects not, to persuade on Account of Authority, but the Validity of his Proofs and Reasons. *Homo, qui erranti comiter monstrat viam, quasi Lumen de lumine suo accendat, facit.* They are not his Reasons or Authority, but that which has Jurisdiction over you, and me, and all of us in Particular, *viz.* Every One's own Reason and Allegiance to the Authority of Truth, which convinces: And who need scruple submitting to such a Friend and Guide as one's self, better inform'd, or at least better considering?

IF some would behave themselves with so much Diffidence and Temper, as to acknowledge themselves *capable* of being in the Wrong, One might be induced, from that Testimony of Ingenuity and good Sense, to think them in the Right: But if they are *really* capable of being Mistaken, it is most certainly their Duty to doubt whether they are, or not; and from doubting to weigh, consider, examine impartially; see and hear with their own proper Eyes and Ears, That the *Truth* which is so plain, lovely and uniting, may no longer be disdain'd, and overlook'd. If upon the easy Scrutiny, it should be found on their Side, to be more comforted and confirm'd in their Sentiments; if against them, as willing to yield, and no less generous to own they have been *Mistaken*; and declare the same with a Noble Frankness, a Conscious Humanity, and a Religious Speediness: From thence forward, they may be sure of enjoying the Glory of Sincerity and Uprightness, in following nothing but the *Truth*, and of disdain'g to be detain'd by any corrupt Motives whatsoever, from the charming Duty of embracing it immedi-

ately, and consigning up our Opinions to the Determination, and our Conduct and Behaviour, to the Guidance of it. By making that healing Declaration openly, and abiding by it constantly, they are further ensured from the sad Effects, various Inconveniences, and real Reproaches, inevitably attending upon an inflexible Adherence to an Error, and Inadvertency, of so considerable Consequence, as that under present Consideration. Nor can they fail of being recompenced with manifold Advantages: For they may depend upon Reaping from within, the mighty Joy and Consolation of being handsomly deliver'd from the wonted Contradiction, between a bad Action and an averr'd good Meaning; and from without, the Applauses and Encomium of all Lovers of Peace and Truth.

A *Rational* Creature can't perform a more Genuine Duty, nor worthier Deed, than to yield to the intrinsic Force of Truth, as soon as apprehended; and to cultivate the Disposition of admiring it even in an *Adversary*; and every where, and at all Times, submitting to its welcome Conviction: For he gets the greatest Victory, who being conquer'd, gains the Truth. And whoever puts in for that Prize, must set up that goodly Discipline in his Mind, which may impartially denominate him as ready to be overcome, as to conquer: *Paratus vincere, & vinci*. By yielding to Truth apparent, we obey the Decision of the appointed Judge of all Doubtfulness, take the Advice, and comply with the Direction of GOD himself. We follow our proper Guide, our best and dearest Friend; dearer than Thousands of Gold and Silver, than Father or Mother, Wife or Children, Superiors, Equals or Inferiors, Antients or Moderns: For she is a Treasure unto Men that never faileth, which they that use become the Friend of GOD. In her is an Understanding Spirit, Holy, One only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to Hurt, loving the Thing that is good; quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, kind to Man, steadfast, sure—Having all Power, over-seeing all Things, and going thro' all Understanding—She is a pure Influence flowing from the
Glory

Glory of the Almighty: The Brightness of the Everlasting Light: The unspotted Mirrour of the Power of GOD, and the Image of his Goodness. If we know that God hath appointed it, What occasion for farther Witness? If sure he hath said it plainly to all Understandings, What need we any other Guide of Controversy? Who are they that have got a Priviledge of not submitting to him?—But every Citizen may be perfectly certain of obeying *his Voice*, who submit to plain *Scripture*, and *Reason*: And upon good Grounds, promise themselves his Peace within their Spirit, as long as they are conscious of his Truth only reigning there; and that their Conformity to it, made sure by proper Enquiry, and sincere Removal of every Hindrance and perverting By-end, is their bounden Conformity to their Maker, and an Approach to their Happiness: Following the Way that leads to Truth, and the Truth that leads to Life; as soon as well known, the Beauty thereof engages Love, and when it is loved, it begins Felicity.

AS Light is the Perfection and Glory of the Sun, so the proper Luster, and Perfection of a reasonable Soul, is the Love, Possession, and Fertility of that active Truth which centers in Duty, influences the Will, and heals its Distempers; regulates its Choice by the Choice of God, its Liberty by the Liberty of God; and renders it one with him, and in that Unity like him. It is the Resting Place of the Soul: *All the Earth* (says *Zorobabel*, 1 *Esd.* 4. 36, &c.) *call-eth upon the Truth, Heaven blesteth it, all Works shake and tremble at it, and with it is no Unrighteous Thing. It endureth and is strong, it liveth and conquereth for evermore. With her there is no accepting of Persons, or Rewards; but she doth the Things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked Things, and all Men do well like of her Works—She is the Strength, Kingdom, Power and Majesty of all Ages; blessed be the GOD of Truth; great is it, and mighty above all Things.* The Mind keeps itself sound by the Means of it; and living upon its own Congenial Food, always preserves its Health and Vigour: *Job* (34. 3.) hath observed of one of its Appetites, *That the Ear tryeth Words, as the Mouth*

Mouth tasteth Meat. The Love of it seems a Natural Relish, and Instinct implanted in the Soul. GOD has taken Security, as it were, of Man for his Obedience to it, by inserting a Native Homage to it, as the *First Principle* and *Dictate* of our Nature: Consequently, To be either wilfully indifferent to the Discovery of it, or resist, or stifle it, is to remain willingly depraved in the most material Concern, and Capacity of our Being. Falshood is too deformed and irreconcilable to the Understanding, for any to be found hardy enough to own they have espoused it. But as for Truth, every-body is even pleased, and takes Notice how beautiful is the Deference to it, in Conversation. There is apparently something sneaking in the Soul, if not in the Countenance of him that declines such common Honesty; but you are as constantly affected and delighted with the visible Greasiness, Quality and Honour in the Face of him, who cheerfully yields to it Evictions.

THE Truth of Words is when they agree with a Man's Thoughts; the Truth of his Thoughts when they agree with Things themselves: Or which is the same Thing, when the Truth in the Subject, or Understanding agrees with the Truth in the Object, the Representation with the Thing represented, the Picture and Description with the Things painted or described, So that the Truth we all contend for, and are bound to Submit to, is established in the necessary Respects, mutual Relations, and immutable Agreements and Disagreements between Things and Things. Was it, or could it be, otherwise, every Thing might equally be a proper Means for every End; every Argument and Medium equally strong to prove every Sort of Conclusion. Which Absurdity and Impossibility is palpable, is disavow'd by all, and that completely proves the other. No Human Understanding can create a New Truth, no more than a real Being in Nature: All its Function and Ability is to *discover* it by joining or separating of signs [or *Idea's*] as the Things signified by them do Agree or Disagree with one another; and it may discover Falshood by marking out the Agreement or Disagreement of Signs and *Idea's* otherwise, than as the Things signified accord or differ;

that

that those are falsely joyned and compounded which ought to be separate, those falsely separated and divided which ought to be joyn'd. If then the Basis and certainty of the Truth inquested lies in Things themselves, as GOD has constituted them by *Nature*, or inform'd us by *Revelation*, and prescribed to us Rules of Conduct and Demeanor with regard to them, it follows, that our Understanding can make nothing true or false, which in itself is otherwise; but must take Things as GOD has made, and prescribed them to us. The Reason of Things in this latitude, the Son of Syrach, says, *the first Man knew not perfectly, no more shall the last find out.* Tully observed very well, *Opinionum Commenta delet dies, Naturæ Judicia confirmat.* 'Tis not Antiquity, nor this, or that Author, because not Man, that makes Truth; they may transmit it as Witnesses, they may set forth their discovering Reasons, and according to their Goodness and Verisimilitude are they to be accounted of.

WE are especially to observe, since our particular Interest or Inclination have not the making any Thing true, or false, our Inclinations to one, or to ther, are ever carefully to be revised by the Understanding. Being loath to perceive the true State of the Matter is no manner of Reason; though indeed the best Abundance have, for rejecting a Thing as false, or uncertain, which is absolutely true; nor is a Wish, however vehement, able, to constitute that true which is not so. For nothing becomes so because it pleases; but because it is true, therefore it must please, at least, be conformed to. Love to Truth is otherwise the meer Pretence, and we utterly false or indifferent to the Attainment of it; in order to be True and undisturbed to some other chosen Interest, or Humor; the guilty Unwillingness of seeing One disappointed, or the Other crost, is that which begets the unreasonable Antipathy, in so many, against considering the Reasons and Evidence of being in the Wrong.

SINCE the requisite Knowledge of Truth is the Assimilation and Conformity of the Understanding to Things; and of the Conscience to Rules, when truly acquainted and irradiated with the real Agreements and

and Disagreements of the one, and the Meaning of the other; if you would be resolv'd what is Truth, or what Kind of it does most import us, go to *Nature*, go to *Holy Scripture*, and to the proper Means of understanding them: They are the Authentick Standard by which we are obliged *to prove all Things*. And for ever adored be the good Providence of GOD Almighty! Who has display'd and rang'd before us those Truths, which affect our greatest Concernments either in this World, or the next, in a most conspicuous Manner, and subjected them to an easy Attainment and Perception; every One carries the Touchstone about him for Tryal and Discovery. He has graciously dealt by the Needs and Occasions of our Souls, in His Holy Scriptures, as in Nature by the Wants and Conveniences of the Body: What is most useful he has wisely made most common, plain, and procurable: Little Search will find out Water, or Fire, little Pains will help the Corn to grow up to Bread, the Fruit-Trees bear of themselves and court Acceptance of their kind Presents; but as for Diamonds, precious stones, or other valuable Impertinences as they are fitted for a few Persons, so are they to be met with in few Places, surrounded with Difficulty, reserved in Darkness and Caverns, hard to be rescued to Light, and polliht for the Use of the Curious: In like manner, has the Allwise Provider served our Souls with the Truth, more precious than Rubies, because indeed extensively necessary; that which concerns the Peace and Welfare of this World, and the Salvation of our Souls in the next, is as common as Day Light, and as cheap as Bread. The fundamentals for our Happiness may be read by him that runneth; a sincere enquiry can't well miss of them. "But commonly the
 " remoter any is from a necessary Article, the less plain
 " and obvious is it to our Understanding, and there-
 " fore if in these we do err and mistake, 'tis not to be
 " wonder'd at". 'Tis a sign that Philosopher was unacquainted with *Revelation*, who stiled it a Business of that *arduous Labour*, as to be brought out of a deep Well; What if there be some of that depth in the *Bible*, that which is most useful Presents itself upon the surface, as common as the Waters that cover the Sea? Would

we but once in this our day agree, to suffer plain Things to influence, how Happy, Peaceable, and Good might we all be? If our Party disputes were brought to the Arbitration of the perspicuous Directions for obeying Governors, so many, and clear, on purpose for the Understanding of the *People*, all inquietness would Vanish, Inadvertencies be rectify'd, a past doubts weighed down with present Duty, and Parties be no more. But if we will be perverse to make difficulties where GOD has made none, and Study untowardness to those known Verities of Peace and Godliness, we bring our Soul into Danger, and the World into Confusion.

WE are arriv'd so far, as to be agreed what Truth we ought most to listen to in the Debate: Of What kind is that, which is our apparent Concern, Virtue, Wisdom and Probity to be determin'd by: And perceive it to be a plain Thing to those, who are duly enclin'd to receive it, according to the Commandment, *in the Love thereof*; and to be defective in that Inclination, is not only a Criminal Indifference, but an effectual shutting the Door against what we pretend to invite in, and has indeed a Right to enter, and take Possession of our Hearts, and put an End to our Divisions: And therefore to be Guilty of a long Inadvertency concerning it, is undoubtedly such a Failure and Sin, as will be charg'd Home to our Account; and with the heaviest Aggregations, if we persist therein. What does that suggest?—But the greater Need of all Haste and good Conscience, to recede from, and retract, as soon as put in Mind of it. I would fain presume, we shall be more instantly dispos'd to it, when we fully consider,

SECONDLY, The Credit and Renown, the singular Glory and Commendation of acknowledging a Mistake, and desisting from it. This Argument has Sense enough to be felt and imbib'd with Pleasure, by every Understanding, that has any sound Taste left for Reputation, and the Sentiments of Honour: Glory sure will prove a sufficient Spur—Truth and Error being mix'd together, is the ordinary Occasion of many false Reasonings. That which makes any great Error plausible, and pass disguis'd and undiscover'd

discover'd, is its Artificial Mixture with some Truth. There is a pretty Representation of this, intended in the Fable; *How Truth at first presented herself to the World, and went about to seek Entertainment; but when she found none, being of a generous Nature, that loves not to obtrude herself upon unworthy Spirits, she resolv'd to leave the Earth, and take her Flight to Heaven; but as she was going up, she chanced Elijah like to let her Mantle fall; and Falshood waiting by for such an Opportunity, snatch'd it up presently, and ever since goes about disguis'd in Truth's Attire.* Differing Opinions are not all false, nor unreasonable; if the plain Things and obscure, which are blended together, and made equally clear by that Means, were fairly parted, the Difficulty would be fairly explicated, and the Dispute com-promised: For there is no such Thing as plain Scripture opposing plain Scripture; but the obscure and plain, thro' the Rashness, Hypotheses, Intrigues, and other evil Passions of Men, are made to dispute with one another; and much of the Contest is about the *Manner of Things*; the Knowledge, much less the Decision thereof, is, for the most part, purposely omitted in those Holy Pages: Hence the jumble of Religions, Notions, and Discords. How many Disputes are of Passion, against Passion?—'Tis the Fate of Reason, dwelling among Men, to partake in their Infirmities; and as long as they over-look that which is plain, and lose themselves in that which is doubtful, they are ever Learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. Reason is not the Rule of itself, but of the Arguments used to shew and unfold it: A Demonstration of just Consequences, drawn from true Principles, is the standing Test of what *appears* reasonable. But as Evil deceives, by falsifying Good; so Error does, by Truth. Would you be glad then to know the ready way to unravel the Mystery of Mistake, discern the Error, and be put in Possession of the Truth? I need not recommend to the *Four Maxims* of Plato, nor the *Four Rules* of *Des Cartes* for finding; because there is nothing wanting, nor desir'd, in so plain a Case, but a due *Attention* and *Recollection* of certain clear Truths: They are, thank GOD, as Keys in our Hand, to examine that which is doubtful, and re-
future

state what is false; and so compleatly unlock the perplexing Difficulty.

BUT here begins the Apology; Whereas the Minds of us Men, are as generally subject to Prejudice, Mistake and Inadvertency, as our Bodies to Diseases: It is so far from being dishonourable for the Mind of any, to be found in either, that it is a very common Thing: And to think all one does in Pursuance of such an Opinion, to be right, is one of the gratefulest and commonest Fallacies residing in the Head of Man. That which appears, at one Time, like a Demonstration to a Man, by a greater Light presented, dwindles into a Sophism, fit for nothing but to be given up. I have known some doubt, and op-pugn the *Innocency of Error*; but no one ever question'd the *Ingenuity* of receding from it. We are all deceived in some Things; and frequently in one another: Only here is the Difference, Some have the virtuous and ingenuous Freedom of Mind, and value for Truth and Peace, as to own and retract it; others are unfortunately beguill'd and with-held from it, by *false* Notions of Stedfastness; and are still Positive they are in the Right, when all Proof of their being so, and with that, all Credit, is departed from them. Let Men once come into the Belief of so certain and excellent a Position, *viz.* That it is more inglorious to be always deceived, than to confess oneself once Mistaken; they would no more think it their Honour to persist so long, or have always something to reply, tho' just as much to the Purpose, as something may perversly be said for any Thing. Is it an Honour? Or an unconscionable Injustice to Truth, to make it more their Business to be thought they are in the Right, than *really* to be so; and when their Heart misgives them, they are not so? Is true Glory and Praise, as distinguish'd from the false, any thing, but what is built in the Relation of obeying Truth, and imitating that which is good, preferably to all other Compliances?

WHOEVER has that good Sense of Religion and Share of Humility, to acknowledge a Mistake of Consequence, will ever be respected as one who has the Furniture of Virtue, Integrity, and true Greatness of

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WHOEVER has that good Sense of Religion and Share of Humility, to acknowledge a Mistake of Consequence, will ever be respected as one who has the Furniture of Virtue, Integrity, and true Greatness of

Soul in him. Good and great People, have been Guilty of Inadvertency and Mistake; but they are the best, the greatest, who confess the One, and retract the other, as soon as they perceive it: And who does not, can neither be good nor great. Tho' it is very illustrious and most excellent in itself, the Noble President of St. Paul has render'd it the more abundant comely, *Acts 23. 5. Then said Paul, I wist not Brethren, that he was the High Priest; for it is written, thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People.* In the obvious Sense of which Words, and the Opinion of Dr. Hammond, and others, the great Apostle confesses, that he did amiss, excuses himself from Inadvertence, and freely retracts the Mistake, as soon as ever put in Mind of it. He makes an Apology for what he had said of the *High Priest*, v. 3. *God shall smite thee thou whited Wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the Law, and commandest thou me to be smitten contrary to the Law; the Command in v. 2. was to smite him over the Mouth.* The smart Violence, and sudden Injustice, might put him into such Disorder, as not to have that Law present to his Mind, which forbade speaking Evil of the Ruler of the People. GOD might permit him not to recollect, that by that Opportunity, the Spirit of Prophecy might make an Eruption against *Ananias*; and at the same Time, give in before the Bench, a Testimonial who St. Paul was: It being an acknowledg'd Case with the Jews, that he who acted as a Prophet, was not under the Obligation of that Precept; whilst the Spirit of Paul himself, as soon as put in Mind by some of the Standers-by, saying, *Reverest thou GOD's High Priest?*—Then said Paul, *I wist not Brethren, &c. i. e.* Under such a Percussion and Outrage upon an innocent Part, which had utter'd nothing but the Truth, I did not just then advert it was the *High Priest*, or *Ruler* of the People, who had given that an illegal and unreasonable Order; it being so contrary to his Office to have done it. Whether *Ananias* was regularly High Priest, or no, is not the main Question; because 'tis certain, he was at least *Ruler of the People*, in the Confession of the Apostle; and by the Injunctions of *Holy Writ*, none in that

that *Authority* ought to have Evil spokē against them. This is the plainest, and far more likely Sense, than that other latent concealed one (so differing Commentators call it) which would bring in St. Paul justifying himself, by rendring *ἐν ᾧ* *Dev*, I did not acknowledge him to be the regular High Priest, being advanc'd (perhaps) by Bribery: For all that Nicery, whether he was so promoted, or not; or whether *ἐν ᾧ* *Dev*, will readily admit that Interpretation; rarely imputable to it in the N. T. seems to be absolutely superseded, by what is plain and manifest: (1.) That he was at least Ruler of the People, *vid.* Dr. Hammond's Note, Luke 3. 2. (2.) St. Paul's immediate Application of a Scripture Rule, Ex. 22. 28. against his own Words, towards such a one, clearly declare, he had committed a Mistake. Nevertheless, he was still so under the Conduct and Impulse of the *Divine Spirit*, as soon to correct the Inadvertency he had fallen into, as a Man provoked. And this is sufficient to preserve the *Dignity* of an Apostle, his Guidance into Truth, and his inviolable Love and Adherence to it. And if the Promise to the Twelve, and the Seventy, *Matth.* 10. 19, 20. *Mark* 13. 11. *Luke* 12. 11, 21, 14. should be *Personal*, and St. Paul not being one of that Number, tho' an *Apostle*, then there is not the least Suspicion of any Derogation from that Promise. This Apostle was remarkable for his *Zeal* in all the Parts and Conduct of his Life: When converted to Christianity, that Religious Passion was translated from Sin to Virtue, by his varying the Object, and growing zealously addicted to that Way of Truth, which before he was furious against; and also by a more gentle, harmless Conduct of it. He says, he found so much Mercy of GOD, to be convinc'd of the Truth, by reason of his doing what he did, ignorantly and in unbelief: It was surely a great Favour and Grace to be so, since he acknowledges if he had not become a Convert, his Ignorance and Unbelief, with never so good Intention, or mistaken Judgment with it, had proved fatal to him. If therefore a mistaken, or misinform'd Conscience, will not justify a Man's Opposition and Unpeaceableness, how right soever his Proceedings may be in his

his own Eyes, according to the present Judgment of Things; it remains, That he and his Conscience lye under an Obligation, not yet comply'd with, of being regulated by better Information, and the serious Consideration of plain Truth and Duty over-look'd; and seeing they are so very plain and clear, they are fit to be the perpetual controuling Rule, for all Consciences in general to walk by: They are always sufficient, when attended to, to rectify the Mind, and in that, the Conduct of all common People in general; whether they make a Judgment what they ought to do, or reflect upon what they have done, as right or wrong; that Judgment, and that Reflection of their Mind, is their *Conscience*, both as it guides and bears Witness to their Actions. Altho' 'tis a Sin for a Man, not to act according to his Conscience (supposing it mistaken) still in Things of great Importance, as the Peace of Society, and Submission to Governors, wherein the Sacred Injunctions are exceeding clear and positive, it will be his Crime not to study the easy, and pursue the needful Discernment; because, we can no otherwise justify following Conscience as our Guide, than as it is guided, not by disputable, but the plain evident Obligations and Prescriptions of Holy Scripture and Reason. This way of resolving Doubts, is intelligible to all, in Duty necessary, in manner easy, and both so conspicuous, as to have no Intricacy at all; 'tis certain to be found by every one upon search; it can be hid to none but those who mightily disguise, or abuse, the Faculty of Thinking.

IF *St. Paul* therefore acknowledg'd himself Guilty of an Inadvertence, and was not asham'd to retract and renounce it Publickly (a whole Assembly being Witness) and immediately and willingly by Stands corrected by his implacable Enemies too, as soon as ever they hinted his forgetting such a Direction of Scripture, no Body, tho' never such a Zealot in their Way, ought to deem it any disparagement to recede from a Mistake, when *friendly* put in Mind of it. He was, at the same Time, an Instance of Inadvertency, and of the highest Honour and Virtue: For he had no sooner an hint given him of the former, but he took it kindly, and

and corrected himself; his Love to Truth was immoveable and impartial, for he fitly respected it, and paid his ready Submission to it; as well from an Enemy, as the dearest Friend; hardly a Fault or a Human Infirmary (which is next to none) before it was converted into a Monument of the most Heroick Virtue; it was more than expiated as soon as committed; He was in a Passion, he forgot himself for a Moment, to shew that no Man is totally exempted from that Frailty, and that the greatest meer Men may, more frequently, have their Intervals of Inadvertencies and Misapprehension: But then he *Publickly* retracted this Mistake; this signifying, that it was beneath no Man living so to do, in a Matter of such Consequence, as entire Submission in Word, as well as Deed, to the Civil Powers set over us. He no sooner recollected himself by what the Standers by said, but he saved them the Trouble of quoting the Scripture against his own Practice, *For it is Written*, says he of his own accord, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of the People*. He knew full well that the *Scripture* was the sacred and impartial Rule ordained to Guide and Govern us all, whatever Differences there might be amongst us; he desired no fairer Play for the Evangelical Truths he was contending for, than to have all the Differences and Variance between them, Submitted to the plain Decisions of it.

I T would be endless to enumerate all great Persons, and Presidents, who have openly, even under their Hand, retracted Errors and Mistakes, when convinced of being guilty of them. *St. Austin* got as much if not more Reputation by his *Retractions*, than all his other Works: In his Preface to them he very finely and ingeniously declares, "that what he was about to do was not to be defer'd; that none but your Imprudent simple People would find Fault with him for finding Fault with himself, and some of his own Writings and Positions; but whoever says I ought not to have said those Things, which I am now censuring and retracting, says the Truth, and Closes with me. And he Conscientiously cites some Scriptures as the Motives and Inducements of his so doing; *If we Judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord; He that*

that offends not in Word the same is a perfect Man; it remains therefore that I Judge myself under that One Heavenly Master, whose Judgment of my Offences, I desire to escape; and whoever shall read these Things, I desire, may not imitate me Erring, but me Retracting, and profiting for the better". He was once a *Manichee*, and when he came to reflect upon himself for it, acknowledges to GOD *Non tu eras, sed error meus, erat Deus meus*, Thou O GOD was not the GOD I submitted to and Obeyed, but my erroneous Opinion; yet he recover'd the soundness of his Judgment after that Corruption, it came upon him, as it were the Flesh, of a Young Child, when the Truth had touch'd and cleansed it.

EUSEBIUS acquaints us that *Beryllus* Bishop of *Bosra* having broach'd some dangerous Errors about the Divinity of our Saviour, and being convinced by *Origen* gave him great Thanks by Letter for his Conviction, and kissed the Hand that thus brought him back.

WHEN an Error concerns the Publick Welfare, none ought to think it above them to retract it, since the renowned Queen *Elizabeth* thought it Her Duty and Advantage to Practice that noblest Humility; in the last Year, but One, of Her Reign, she set forth a Proclamation against the Monopolies of Her own granting, as soon as she was made sensible by the Enquiries of Parliament that she had been misled. Whereupon the House of Commons order'd the Speaker attended by *Eighby* Members to return Her Majesty Thanks. She gladly took that Occasion to return them these Expressions among others. "I owe you Hearty Thanks and Commendations, for your singular Good-Will towards me, not only in your Hearts and Thoughts, but which you openly expressed and declared, whereby you have recalled me from an Error proceeding from my Ignorance, not my Will." &c.

SEVERAL of the finest Reasoning and deepest Learning in our Nation have thought it an encomium upon their Judgment to recant an Error. Mr. *Lock* in his *Human Understanding* generously retracts

tracts one in his Preface, which he had committed [concerning Liberty and Will] and does it too, (for these are his Words) " With as much Freedom and Readiness as I at first publish'd what then seem'd to me Right, thinking myself more concerned to quit and renounce any Opinion of my own, than oppose that of another when Truth appears against me " : and p. 151. 3^d. Edition. " As a Lover of Truth and not a Worshipper of mine own Doctrines, I own some Change of my Opinion; neither being so Vain as to fancy Infallibility, nor so disingenious as to dissemble my Mistakes for Fear of blemishing my Reputation " Mr. Norris in the End of his *Beatitudes* 4th Edition retracts an Error about the Nature of Sin which he had advanced, Dr. *Whitby* writ the 2^d Part of the *Protestant Reconciler* as an Answer to his own first Part. Before him Bishop *Stillingfleet*, in like manner, receded from his *Irenicum*: To all such Instances, the Words of the Poet may be apply'd,

Si non errasset fecerit ille minus.

And if we know any Modern Strayers from the Truth, and well inclin'd to return to it, let us give them the same Complement. Whatsoever Errors, Mistakes, or Inadvertencies, any of us may be guilty of, Behold how they may become an Occasion of Glory! If we have no other way of greatning our Characters, and arriving at laudable Fame; this of *retracting* is ready, this of *Recanting* is open to us. 'Tis certainly a virtuous and a glorious Ambition; It is an Honour in the highest Veneration, with the greatest and wisest: And are they not the best Judges? It sensibly betokens a Largeness of Soul, Uprightness of Heart, a free generous Mind, and a Conscience under the Direction of GOD and Religion, and not the Seducement and Corruptions of Men and Party.

AND whoever will glorify himself this Way, above his Brethren, let us delight to honour him, and congratulate with him, as with an *Ingenuous* Man: Nay, honour'd he will be by GOD and
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good Men: GOD Almighty, the Supreme King of all, does as good as send an *Herald* to such a One, to invest him with a *George and Garter*, and constitute him *Knight* of the most Noble Order of *Truth*. Nor needs there an Act of Parliament, to declare it glorious to retract a Mistake; it is exceeding worthy and commendable in itself, unless perchance it would be the Means of promoting those Revocations. The *Athenians* bestow'd an exquisite *Encomium* upon *Pompey*, when they told him, "Thou art so much the more a God, as thou confess't thyself a Man". So the Honour and *Encomium* is the same (whether our *Universities* bestow it or not) to say, *Thou art so much the wiser, by acknowledging thyself mistaken*. Besides, to encourage Recoveries to our Duty, and render them Universal, there's Orders come down from Court, That *Party-Defenders* must not be treated as Spies, but as mistaken Friends: For the Royal Prudence, desires rather to lessen their Numbers by reclaiming them, than by making Examples*. Those that obtain Pardon, and those that did not divulge their Inclinations, or Perjury, in open Rebellion, upon their future Peaceableness, may plead His Majesty's Forgetfulness of past Discontents, and assume a Title to Royal Grace. His most justly celebrated Grace and Goodness, armed with the due Measures, and the admirably chosen Instances of Justice, how mightily does it increase its attractive Force? Like a Loadstone, armed with a proper Proportion of Iron, prodigiously augments its Attraction; so the other is powerful enough to win over a Breast of Iron. The Conviction is full of Benignity and Awe, in Imitation of the Divine Compound of Love and Fear, which GOD makes use of in his governing over, and treating with Men. He takes Pleasure in those who will be so far won over to Hope in his Favour, He holds out the Royal Scepter, and bids all the Mistaken be free from the Chains and Slavery of Prejudice, and cease from injuring themselves; To

* *Vid. the King's last Speech, before he went to Germany.*

cease biting the Lip ; To plane the contracted Brow, and look more benignly upon their Friends, and no longer alienate their Affections ; To clear the Down-look, brisk the lowering Countenance, in Prospect of his shining upon them ; To be no longer moody, nor deaf to the Duty of a *Christian*, nor blind to their Interest and Happiness as *Engliss* Men, and *Protestants* ; To abate that Resentment, which has transported them too far ; Moderate furious Zeal, and mix a little more Light with it ; To give up unreasonable, give up fruitless Opposition, and submit to the firm Empire of their Happiness, and only Security ; and forbear cavilling at his Proceedings, when they should be shewing Obedience, or to look for Favour without Repentance, or Places without deserving.

BUT if they will still fortify themselves in Error, against Light and inward Conviction, or the obvious Means of better Information ; all the bad Effects of Obstinacy, will be the Issue of it. It becomes their Pertinacy, not their Perseverance ; for this is only in a good Thing, the other in that which is evil and pernicious. It argues an immoderate Partiality, culpable Bigorry, and a morose State of Mind and Judgment, in Hostility against the Light of our Duty. It declares a Temper which would rather be pleased, humour'd, and still deceiv'd, than admit unacceptable Truth, effective of the Change they have no Heart to ; tho' never so necessary and saving ; so clearly, nor often propounded by GOD, if it grates upon the favorite Error, it has cold Entertainment. This resolute Addictedness to One's Opinion, or rather Contumacy of Mind, is the greatest Adversary to Truth, and the Peace of the World, the Unity of the Spirit, and the Bond of Peace ; the Prolonger of Disputes, Hinderer of Reconciliation, and the Author of innumerable Mischiefs, Publick and Private. And as we are bound to commiserate one anothers mutual Inadvertency, we should endeavour to remove it by all gentle and fair Means. We ought to be Champions for the Knowledge of the Truth, that leads to Unity and Quiet ; not Slaves to Ambition, Vain-glory, or any Sect, Division, or Party.

of whatever Denomination : And forthwith forego that untenable Vanity of never being in a Mistake.

The great thing wanting towards Conviction, is a Willingness and Goodness of Mind to be undeceiv'd, upon Supposition of being in an Error.—Is not a Retreat in Time as good as a Victory ? May not a Garrison be surrender'd upon as Honourable Terms, as kept ?—But 'tis an ignominious Pride and Villany, to be made sensible of One's Mistake, and not desist from it. To believe Things true or false, right or wrong, not from the Manifestation of Evidence, nor its proper Reasons and Arguments, but meerly as they serve a Turn, and agree or disagree with Prejudices, is a dreadful Instance of the Perverseness of Man's Heart, and of Party-depravation. 'Tis an excellent Maxim of the Imperial Philosopher, (*M. Anton.*) *That Man is no less free who submits to the Opinion of another, than he who continues obstinate to his own, such a Change being often the Perfection of Wisdom and Judgment.* To yield to a Victory of Reason, relinquish a detected Error, own a Misapprehension ; is both a bounden Duty, and the greatest Commendation of One's Ingenuity and Reason : For it is being constant all the Time to *Reason*, which must necessarily be the truest Courage, Strength, Glory and Perfection of a Man, as long as he is a *reasonable* Being ; to quit a Mistake, is the Proof of his Nature, and a Sample of a generous high Spirit ; as not to do it, betrays a Meaness and Baseness, beneath one who calls himself a Man. All worthy of that Name, ought to live up to the essential Obligation of growing *wiser*. But, How can any grow wiser without some Change of his Mind ? Or, How that Change effected, without opening the Mind to farther Discoveries and Improvements ; or, Removing some Error, in Possession ? That there can be no other rational and honourable Constancy, but that I shall make appear by and by.

THE Errors and Inadvertencies, which have no ill Consequencies, wrong neither GOD nor MAN, are harmless Things, innocent Differences ; but what have an ill Influence upon Conduct, and make a palpable

palpable Digression from our Christian Obligations; they are certainly blame-worthy; very worthy to be retracted. To be a *good Subject*, to the Sovereign Power placed over us, is, by the Tenor of Scripture, made essential to the Endeavours of being a good Christian; the Non-performance of the first, is a prodigious Hinderer and Slanderer of all those Duties, which are connected together by *Charity*; a bitter Zeal, Anger, and Dissatisfaction, dislocates the Principles, and beats off the mild Impressions of the Christian Religion; poisons the Soil and lays waste the several Inclosures, where its Virtues and Graces should be growing in Quietness and Godliness of Living. However the Neglect of a Duty of that high Nature, and wide Influence, may concern our Temporals, it does as surely affect our Eternal Interests, as GOD has strictly enjoin'd the one, and forbid the other. The Rule of that Duty, for Instance, is to lead quiet and peaceable Lives; the Rule of Peace and Quiet is, *Not to speak Evil of Dignities*; but if the *Reverse* is the Produce of our Sentiments and Opinions, we must conclude them not so right as they should be; by their Fruits ye may know them; if the Fruit is bad, so is the Tree; 'till this is alter'd, the other must be naught; if one is to be amended, the other is certainly to be eradicated: If then you would compleat the Amendment, it must be by the Atonement of Retracting. And it would be bravely resolved, to let that be seen in some Publick Revocation; if not so Publick, let it be audible to your Neighbours; if not audible, at the least, visible to all Men, in a silent Alteration in Words and Behaviour: Let Blushes confess Conviction, and the Shame of holding out any longer, *erubuit, salva res est*, contrive some way or other, to make Profession of quitting your Mistake, and you'll see all good People caress and esteem you; Think you innocent and well-meaning: When you have taken that Step, both easy and honourable, you are met half-way towards signing an Agreement between all the wise and peaceable. 'Tis the base Principle of *Papists*, never to free a *Profelyte* from the Suspicion and Jealousy,

lousy, which cleaves to a Defection; but there is in *others*, a Prerogative of Mind, which distinguishes itself by Candor and Benignity; and that is a Security to *New Converts*, that they shall be instated in all the Trusts that belong to new Friends, and be put upon a level with them in Advantages. How much better is that, than to continue stiff in the wrong, and in the Torture of envying others the Possession of the Truth? Acting as if it was the highest Crime to be convinc'd of a Mistake, or inglorious and unchristian to be peaceable, or contented, or of one Mind, or to forbear the condemn'd Sins of evil Surmising; of thinking seditious Jealousies, and Perjury, lawful: If these are not Sins, and head-strong Errors, fit to be desisted from, What are?

I KNOW 'tis a certain *Axiom*, That nothing persuades Men, or satisfies their native Desires of being in the Right, but Truth, or the *Appearance* of it; But, with Submission, is it possible for Contradictions and palpable Absurdities to carry with them so much as the Appearance of Truth? They are detestable to common Sense, upon the least Attention: and it is a sure Way of finding out what is not the Truth; For Truth is ever equal and Consonant with itself, *Omne verum omni vero consonat*; but Error is full of Disagreement: Notorious Inconsistency is an *Opprobrium* to Reason and bespeaks the besottedness of it. The *Non-jurors* proceed fairly and consistently; the *Papists* with regard to their Religion Act the same coherent Part, both out of Conscience, both out of Interest. But for *others* to be forward Instruments of their own Ruin, and be ready to set Fire to the Train so visibly laid to blow up our General Felicity, by joining with the former, is such a prodigious Instance of Folly and Impiety (says the Address of the Archbishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Canterbury, June, 28. 1716.) that we want Words to express our Detestation of it. One side, with the Church of England, professes Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance, together with the Right of preventing the Ruin of the Church and Civil Liberties; the other at the Times of the loudest Professions of it, so famously forgot the Practice, as to undo the

the King who relyed upon it : And now again upon the late revival of the Cry, play booty with the Doctrine, prevaricate with their own Tenets, by deserting the Performance. Comment the Doctrine by the Practice, and the Duty with the most proper Occasions of performing, and you are both surpriz'd with Inconsistency, and imposed on by them; the strenuous Doctors and Assertors are Poor forgetful Performers : Nor seem they to regard it in their Actions as a Duty, but merely as subservient to their Interest, or Humour; when pleased and preferr'd, it becomes forthwith Sacred; when displeased with so small a Grievance, they have not the Assurance to Name, *i. e.* Want of Places, they, in an Instant, become Actively turbulent, querulous, resisting, railing Subjects; and when the Hand fails, continue the Assault with the Tongue, which they teach the delicious Spice of *Speaking Lyes all the Day long*, and freely initiate them into the Holy League of *being set on Fire of Hell*. They willingly let the very *Whiggs and Republicans*, as they call them, out strip them far in their beloved Doctrine. Let them continue True to Passive Obedience, they would certainly be agreeable to Governours; but if so unconscionable to deny it to those, who make *Law* the Rule and Measure of Governing, and against whom they can alledge no Diviation, whilst they aver it, by Principle, unlawful to refuse it to a Prince *subverting and dispensing with Laws*; if actually provok'd for nothing nevertheless satisfied in Conscience, they ought not to be provoked with Hardships, are they not foul Practitioners? Pretenceless inexcusable Murmurers? The pressure of their own Tenets urges on the Inconsistency, their boasted acknowledgments confutes them without an Opposer, they clearly infer the Practice of opposing and inveighing against the Administration of their Governours from the Necessity of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance; of broaching and dispersing Lyes from the Obligations of speaking the Truth; of maligning and stirring up Strife from those of being quiet and minding their own Business; of contradicting the Design of their Oaths, from the sacred Tyes

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of fulfilling them ; several are able to justify their Assertion that the King, Lords and Commons are a Faction, by the Mathematical Evidence that a little Part is bigger than the Whole ; abundance make Proof of their Aversion to the Pretender by carressing *Absolute Indefeasible* Right, for his only Sake ; and every other Jealousy and Discontent, which can in the least promote his Interest, and invite the Calamity : Whilst their concern for the Church of *England* and the Protestant Religion is equally demonstrated from their cold Dislike of Submitting to the Protection of that Tool of *Rome* ; a great many pretend they are better satisfied in his *Legitimacy* the more impossible it has grown to discover it, tho' at the Time of the supposed Birth, when the Nation was best able to Judge, the whole Nation vehemently suspected an Imposture : And how many think of retrieving their Way to Honours and Royal Favours, by Calumny and the most undutiful Opposition ? And still Hope to have what, by those Methods, they make more and more Impossible to succeed in. Is there any Pleasure ? Can there be any Reputation of *Judgment* in acquiescing under these and many other Absurdities, Dishonours to Reason and Consideration ? Such Inconsistencies with our Preservation and Welfare, and the Duty of a Christian, and a Subject, hang like a Millstone upon a drowning Cause, never to emerge more. The greatness of the Temptation sometimes excuses a Proceeding ; but what Temptations is there in *Popery* or *Slavery* ? — All the Protestant World abroad have listen'd to our Jars with Amazement, that a Controversy should last so long ; the true State of which at first Sight is, *Bona ratio cum perdita, Mens sana cum amentia bona denique spes cum omnium rerum desperatione confligit.* But be it known for the Redemption of our National Credit, that this Scene of Infatuation, inconsistency and Contradiction has happen'd, but in Part, to the People of the Realm ; the main Sticklers and Disturbers of King *GEORGE* are the dregs of Reason, the lowest in Fortune and Understanding ; who are giddy with their own Credulity, may be hired to live in a perpetual Lye, who devote their Belief and the Service of their Faculties to the sordid ignoble Perswasive of an intoxicating

Eating Treat; whose Wickedness is owing to their Weakness, have not Sense enough to own a Mistake, and cease an Opposition, that can effect nothing but their own Ruin and Punishment.

BY finding out, in this Case, what is false, you at the same Time discover, what is true and right; *Rectum sui est Index, & Obliqui*: Freedom from Contradiction, is one Cognizance of the Truth; the Plenty of it, a plenary Evidence of Error. But there is one complicated Absurdity still behind; worse than all the rest, *viz.* An Unchristian Rebellion to an Authority we all pretend to submit to. Are not the various (unmerited) Calumnies, Seditious Reflections, Jealousies, Disaffection, Rage, Animosity, Discontents, which so many are Guilty of, against the King, and those put in Authority under him; all Contradictions, all Violations of those *Holy Scriptures*, requiring the Contrary at our Hands? If the Opinion and Practice of such is right, then the Bible must be false; but if you will allow that to be the Measure of Duty, and Judge between us, you must needs regulate both, and own yourselves in the wrong: *Let God be true, tho' every Man a Lyar*. If there was nothing else in the Struggle but Truth, it might soon be decided, who is in the Right: Let those Places of Scripture, which are certain, and confess'd on all Hands, outweigh the doubtful and disputed; and there is an End of the Contest. There's a Proverb in Italy, *'Tis better be condemn'd by Ten Physicians, than one Judge*; 'tis in like manner better, the Majority of the Nation should condemn, than the Sacred Scripture pronounce Sentence against you. Take then your Bible, and see whether those Things are so. Turn to *Acts 23. 5*. How readeest thou? The Reading will imprint the Conviction deeper. It advises you to look into *Ex. 22. 28*. where you will find the same Prohibition, *Of not speaking Evil of the Ruler of the People*. Turn to the solemn Cautions of Solomon, *Prov. 24. 21*. *Fear thou the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change*: And *Eccles. 10. 20*. *Curse not the King, no, not in thy Thought; for a Bird of*

the Air shall carry the Voice. To the Directions of St. Peter, 1 Epist. 2. 13. &c. Submit yourselves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's Sake; whether to the King, as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him, for the Punishment of Evil Doers; and for the Praise of them that do well; and v. 17. Honour the King. And in his 2 Epist. 2. 10. Presumptuous are they, and self-willed, that despise Government, and are not afraid to speak Evil of dignities. If these clear Authorities of God, uncontroverted in Sense, were not enough, I could recommend to more. I might justly urge our Saviour's decisive Words, Matth. 22. 21. Render therefore unto Caesar the Things that are Caesars, &c. because if we give them their genuine Interpretation, from Historical Circumstances, our Blessed Lord therein acknowledges the Divine Right, and Legality of a Government, that had much such another Revolution Settlement, as ours at present*. In a true Account of Things, That Text ought to be the last in the Bible, which the Adversary should think of screening their Conscience under. I might freely insist upon the 13 Chap. to the Romans; for that is full as little to their Purpose, after they have interpreted Nero to be the Reigning Caesar, whom St. Paul enforces Obedience unto, because he came much worse into the Seat of Government†. If our Saviour was upon Earth, or St. Paul in Great Britain, they would both approve of, and submit to, the Present Establishment, as a most Righteous and Divine Government; and persuade by Word of Mouth, as they have done by Letter, to a most Quiet and Loyal Submission, an entire Peace, Unity, and Contentment. And, Why should any among us pretend to have a more tender Conscience than they?

* Vid. Preface of a Sermon, Preach'd at Wisbeech, in the Isle of Ely, the Sunday after Queen Ann's Demise.

And Dr. Turner's Sermon, before the Lord-Mayor, 1716, upon the said Text.

† Vid. Preface ubi supra.

Or, Than they, better understand the Divine Right of Governors?

What other therefore is your Dutiful Submission to the King, and all put in Authority under him, but your uncontestable Duty and Submission unto GOD? Nothing more is desir'd of any, but the Submission of their Understanding, and Conscience unto the Lord God. Ponder of, and settle it in your Hearts, whether 'tis a *Party*, or a General Duty, to obey *Christ*, obey *St. Paul*, *St. Peter*, &c. and to be a *Christian*. If you will be refer'd by the Blessed Scriptures, there is nothing wanting, or to be wish'd for, to unite us together; but Obedience to those most Holy Precepts. Let the impartial Preachers and Enditers of them be Referrees, we are agreed. If you will stand by those Sacred Authorities, you are accus'd of all, convinc'd of all, to be in the Wrong: For tho' you think you have a Right to differ from some People, you certainly have none at all to differ from, and be disobedient to the other. There's no such Thing, as a Dispensation, in all the Christian Religion, to tolerate Perverseness. Return then from whence you are fallen, *i. e. Passive-Obedience*, and *Non-Resistance*. Repent and do your first Works; and when you are converted, strengthen your Brethren: As you were not contented to be mistaken alone, be as forward in removing Mistakes. Take Refuge in the Example of *St. Paul*, there is Affinity in the Case; make him your Excuse, make him your Pattern, in openly, ingenuously, owning your Inadvertency, to the Rule of your Duty. You may truly own further, That you have been in a Causeless Passion against your Governors a long Time; tho' they have not order'd you in Person to be *smitten*, for your uncommission'd Freedoms against them. 'Tis a Shame to think it a Disgrace to revoke an Error *Publickly*, when so many great, wise, judicious; so many bright and most excellent Patterns, have made the Practice praiseworthy, Heroick, and well-belov'd of GOD, and Man. Every body of Sense and Virtue, will Honour and Applaud those that do; readily and friendly Apologize for them, '*Britons* are but Men, and Men

Men may err and be Mistaken: Forget and forgive moreover according to the Rule, *If thy Brother repent forgive him.* Is there then any Spark of Christian, or British Ingenuity, left in our Bosom? There let it glow, and inflame our Resolutions to omit no Time nor Opportunity of partaking of so excellent an Honour; to see ourselves accosted from Heaven with Truth as Bright as the Sun, and from the Region of *Great Britain* with *Sovereign* Mercy, Lenity and Forbearance, like unto GOD's, is enough to make Scale's fall from our Eyes. The shortest Folly is evermore the best; the confessing and being sensible of it, lessens it; but adhering and resolutely justifying, doubles and trebles it, and makes the last Error worse than the first: To oppose such Truth *is kicking against the Pricks*, which will prove the Opponent's wounding and torment; and to deal scurrilously, is to the effect of the Proverb, *he that Spits against the Wind Spits in his own Face.* Railing is nothing but a plain Confession of the Defect of Reason; every vile and unworthy Opposition subscribes to the Truth of the Cause it sets it self against. So little good is like to come of Trusting in Perverseness; the more we palliate the more we only aggravate our Fault; ever fumbling for Reasons and Excuses to justify our Conduct, but never able to find so much as one.



The True Reputation of **CONSTANCY**
and **STEADINESS** *stated: And all*
other **EXCUSES** *consider'd.*

THE first and Principal Hinderer, and most general Retarder of the Noble Duty I have been treating of, is that false Notion of Constancy and Steadiness, which heedlessly and unfortunately prevails in the World. The *fancied* Honesty, and *imaginary* Honour arising from thence, with regard to the several acquired Mistakes in Human Life, the Sects of Religion, and Parties of Men, continues to be a pernicious Obstruction to Conviction, Unanimity, and Peace. It will therefore be of as extensive Benefit to be rightly appriz'd in this, as to have our Inadvertencies rectified, Mistakes quitted, and a speedy End put to our Differences and Divisions. In pursuance of this Design I must distinguish between true, and false Constancy; one a Virtue and real Honour, the other a Vice and real Obstinacy. And since *Obstinacy* is a Recrimination generally retorted by all Persons at Variance, I shall endeavour, before I finish, to give some notifying Marks and Criteria, wherein all People are agreed, that by them we may plainly discern, each for himself, where Constancy ends, and Obstinacy begins.

I. **CONSTANCY** is deservedly held in high Reputation in the World; the Stamp of Value current on it, is no more than its due: And I would by no Means offer to impair it, when once it will submit to be measured by the *Honour that comes from GOD*. Joh. v. 44. *How can ye believe who receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that comes from GOD only?* So notorious an Hindrance is the Reputation, which corrupt Men deal out to one another, to the embracing the Plain and Important Truth that comes from **GOD**, that our *Saviour* in Order to make the Assertion more strong and affecting,

fecting, commits it to the Way of Interrogation, *How can ye believe? &c.* Implying a remarkable Distinction between the Honour which Men commonly agree to give one another, and that which comes from GOD; that one is partial, the other impartial, the first false and delusive; the latter true and instructive, being founded in the Love of Truth and ready Obedience to it; that it was impossible they should believe and be converted, as long as they had both so false a Notion, so firm an Inclination, and so strict a Friendship for it, *Joh. xii. 42, 43.* We find many of the Chief Rulers (considerable leading Men among the People) even when convinced in their Conscience, would not confess CHRIST; the Reason follows, *because they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of GOD.* Therefore chose still to go along, publickly, with the Misapprehensions, deceived, and diseased Opinions of others, contrary to the reallity of Things, and the bright shining Light of their Duty; rather than forfeit the dear Reputation of Constancy, or undergo the supposed Shame of deserting the Side they had been long of, or the Disgrace of being excommunicated and despised for Tergiversation. 'Tis true, the Scripture very much recommends Firmness and Constancy; *That we hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering; be not tossed too and fro with every Wind of Doctrine by the slights of Men. Beware lest you also being led away by the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Steadfastness.* Seneca defines Wisdom, *semper idem velle atque idem nolle*, always to chuse and refuse the same Things: And there are other magnanimous Sentiments and sparkling Thoughts in him, and other Authors about it *. There are assumed Motto's among ourselves, such as, *mutare aut timere Spem. Animus semper idem* with a Representation of Swimming against the Stream and *Moveor immotus* with the

* *Magnam rem puta, unum Hominem agere;*

Præter Sapientem autem nemo unum agit. Senec.

Ante omnia hoc cura ut constes tibi. id.

Nihil est, quod tam deceat, quam in omni re gerenda consilioque capiendo servare Constantiam. Cic. de off.

Emblem of a Needle in a Sea-Compass still moving but inflexibly, towards the North. I say these fine Sayings and Emblems, are apt to be admired; and the Maxims and Injunctions of sacred Scripture beget an high Opinion and Idea of Constancy; and very apt they are to stiffen a Man's Mind to the Perswasion he is of, and confirm him very Agreeably that he is in the Right, for no other Reason, than because he is resolv'd *not to Change*: Whereas those Places of Scripture, and every just encomium ever yet pass'd upon Constancy, all proceed upon a *previous* Supposition that you are in the Right; not one of them gives you Possession of the Truth, but take for granted, that diligent Examination and sincere Endeavours had been used in finding out that, and no corrupt Considerations conducted, or conducts, your Judgment and Adherence to the Sentiments you are of. What saith the Scripture? *That ye be stedfast, unmoveable and establisht*; in what? But as it follows, *in the Truth, rooted and grounded in the Faith*. Neither does it oblige us to hold every Thing fast, but solemnly, as in the same Place, *that which is good*; and to find out, that *all things are commanded to be proved*. We are to contend earnestly but then it is for the Faith. Was it otherwise; every Praise and Exhortation to Constancy serves to harden the Man more in Error, and instead of emancipating from, fetters him down the faster in his Mistakes; it should invest him with Virtue and the Assurance of Truth, but behold? It establishest him titely in the Wrong, in Contumacy, intemperate Assurance, Contention, in a Resolution not to be convinced, not to change, or so much as suspect himself in the Wrong, in extream Perverseness, and what not?

As long as Obstinacy in the Wrong mimicks the true Constancy of Mind, and Glory of being stedfast in the Right, rather than not partake in the Applause, People will be coming in for a Share, by adhering Manfully and Immoveably to the Side they have espoused, whether Right, or Wrong; nay, after they are shrewdly afraid they are in the Wrong of it; and sooner than not be staunch and honest, as they call

call it, Sacrifice any other Duty to that Credit. Thus Vice and Dispraise by having Constancy for a Second, often filches the repute of Virtue, and so renverses the Foundations of Praise; it puts on her Livery and therewith deceives the Simple; because it gives a lustre and Addition to her, it is therefore ignorantly and unjustly Thought to give a Reputation to Vice, whereas it renders it, all the Time, the more exceeding sinful. Now, all these untoward Notions and mischievous Mistakes would immediately be removed by any of us, who will please to attend seriously and impartially to these following Reflections.

I. THAT the Honour which comes from GOD is the only true Standard of Honour and Reputation. If he is in the Right, Divisions and Parties must be in the Wrong, in setting up any other unequal Model of Praise and Esteem. It differs little from refusing to be referr'd to him; rather, it comes full up to the *calling Good Evil, and Evil Good, putting Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes*. But, if we be so far tractable as to allow Him the Right of Deciding and Controuling, or of Knowing, or Discovering wherein the Virtue of Constancy and the Commendation of Stedfastness consists, then we may be certain,

2dly. THAT they only do consist in being Constant to important Truth, and the plain Will of God, and stedfast to clear Reason and Duty. Our Constancy and Fidelity are under all and every Obligation we stand in to these great, good, saving and uniting Things, and no other. For in Matters of little or no Consequence, where only GuesSES and Conjectures are conversant, there Constancy is not a Virtue, neither Obstinacy a Fault; therefore [the worth of the former must ever be derived from the worth of the Thing we firmly adhere to. As in Martyrdom, 'tis not the Death, but the Cause, that makes the Martyr; since staking the highest Wager may be an Argument of Confidence, as much

as of Truth, it always proves the first, but not always the latter; so, 'tis not the persevering in an Opinion, tho' neer so inflexibly, nor long, that forms a virtuous Constancy and a Perseverance in the Truth, but the *Grounds* and *Reasons* for our Persevering: If they are incompetent and unjustifiable by the plain Truths of Scripture, then instead of taking off the Fault by Excuse of Constancy, and Pretences of Stedfastness, we only fasten it the more on, and change the good Character of Perseverance and Firmness into immoveable Tenaciousness, and a Resoluteness to remain under a deluded State of Judgment. I said *plain* Truths and Directions of Holy Scripture; for they are doubtless qualified to decide; 'tis to no Purpose to expect what is dubious should terminate a Doubt, or one Uncertainty clear up another. Is Adherence therefore to conspicuous Truth, manifest Duty, and a Cause clearly and undoubtably good, the *Virtue* of Constancy? and cleaving to the contrary of these, the *Vice* of Obstinacy? what else is the Adjuster and Apprizer of our Steadiness, or of our Change; but the Measure of Truth, and of Goodness? Then also it demonstrably follows, That our Obligation to receive Evidence sufficient for our Conviction, with respect to either of them, is superiour to our Obligations to Stedfastness.

THE Rejecters of such sufficient Evidence, are denominated in the *New Testament*, ἀποροι, absurd People, whom all the appointed *Topicks* for convincing a Reasonable Creature, can't move nor alter: And what we translate in several Places, (*Col. iii. 6. Eph. v. 6, &c.*) *Children of Disobedience*, in the Force of the Word, signifies Children of *Incredulity*, an unperswadible Contumacy, such as sets Conviction and Persuasion at Defiance. Whilst the *Bereans* are renowned in the Volume of the Book (*Acts xvii. 11.*) for the Temper meet for it, as more noble than others, *i. e.* *Εὐγενέστεροι*, of a more manly, and rational Genius, having the Ingenuity, Candor, and free Disposition, towards the Truth, reigning in their Breast, to examine and compare; and not like others, remain inflexible against superior Light and Evidence,

but to yield, and be convinced by it, as in Duty bound. *Whatsoever doth make manifest, is Light*, as the Scripture attests. “ * As we need no other Marks “ to distinguish Light from Darkness, but Light it- “ self ; so neither any other Marks to distinguish “ Truth, than the Brightness of the Evidence which “ surrounds it, and ought to convince the Understand- “ ing,” and oblige it to surrender notwithstanding the Opposition made to it from other bye Considerations ; it ought to embrace and salute, wheresoever it finds Her, with that Readiness and Satisfaction, as the Eye opens to the Light ; for where the Understanding is not vitiated by wilful Default, there is the same Joy and Congruity between that, and Truth, as between the other and Light.

WE are all of us therefore, under that superior and indispensable Concern, of submitting to greater Evidence of Reason and Duty ; and where that clearer and plainer Manifestation offers itself, the Man is so far from being obliged in any Degree of Honour, or Constancy, still to judge a Thing so, because he heretofore judg’d it ; still to say, and maintain, by virtue of his having heretofore said, and maintain’d it ; that on the contrary, he is oblig’d in the Function of a Man, and Christian, by all the Tyes of Honour, and of Reverence to Truth, to desist, and change his Mind. A Change in that Circumstance, since we are all liable to Misinformation, and Inadvertency, and the greatest and best have thought it their Honour (the Honour certainly that comes from G O D) to acknowledge it publicly, is so well secured from the Imputation of Shame, or Inconstancy, that is is our only Constancy, our infallible Duty, our highest Credit.

TO govern ourselves by other Sentiments, the greatest Absurdity, as well as Mischief, is the wretched Consequence. As to touch upon the *Absurdity* : Because a Change is sometimes a Sign of Inconstancy, therefore always ; is just such another Argument, as because Delay, is the Counsel and effect of Prudence in

some Things, therefore in all : Whereas, there are several Things, and Cases, (as Repentance, &c.) where Delay, is certain Folly. Just so, 'tis indubitable Folly, or Inconstancy to Reason, not to change in some Cases, where there is sufficient Reason for it. To change for Reasons of Truth, Duty, and Conscience; is to be constant to *Truth, Duty, and Conscience*, 'tis for certain the Honour that comes from G O D, our Praise, Sincerity, our Vertue. But to change for sinister Ends, and unworthy Motives, is the *true*, scandalous, dishonourable Inconstancy, no better than Hypocrisy and Iniquity. As steady a Thing as Righteousness and Integrity seem to be, it admits of Change and Alteration from variety of Circumstances, Necessity, and Providences : And as our Duty alters, 'tis but just and holy that our Resolutions alter with it. *Jeremiah sincerely desired the Preservation of the Kingdom of Judah, and the Liberty of his Country ; but after Zedekiah had taken an Oath of Allegiance to the King of Babylon, it was his Business to advise Zedekiah and his People to yield Jerusalem to him.* It appears then, that true Steadiness, Honesty, or Integrity, is consistent in some Cases, with a Change, and some Alteration with Constancy ; that neither Steadiness, nor Constancy, consist in being resolutely wedded to our Opinions, or impreguably determin'd never to flinch ; but only in a fix'd Resolution to follow the Dictates of Reason and Duty, never deviate from that, and ever comply with it, as soon as it clearly appears, and be always susceptible of better Information, in order to come to the Certainty of it. There is a certain Light wherein a Picture always appears best ; so, there are Views, wherein Truth will appear in its most captivating Charms ; and by Way of Tryal, and Enquiry, 'tis good to hitch our selves, till we find it out ; *Prove all Things, hold fast that which is good.*

I hope, 'tis evident by this time, That Honesty and Integrity, (other Words for Constancy) are far from being froward or inveterate, obstinate or stubborn ; but disposed to alter our Opinions, and Conduct, as often as we see, or are informed, that plain Reason, or apparent Duty require it. To act and believe otherwise, is, in truth, to murder those good

Names, prostitute GOD and Truth, to our Will and Humour, to the Interest and Service of our Sect or Party; and transfer Constancy from Virtue and a good Conscience, where it should be, to the Errors of Opinions, Opposition and Resentment of the other, where it should not be.

THE important Truth, and necessary Duty, which ought to guide and govern us all, are Principles both plain, stable and certain. To them we owe a steadfast Adherence, not to variable Men, who take them up, and lay them down, follow or forsake; just as they happen to serve best a present Convenience. For Instance; The Love of our Country, of the Preservation of its Pure Religion and Liberties, is a *first Principle*, and supremely plain; all the Precepts in Holy Scripture for Peace and Submission to the Powers that are, are subordinate to that, and suppose it as necessarily, as that a Thing must be what it is, before it can be obeyed. We have all heard of the Time when this memorable Preservation happen'd; only there are not a Few, who have Suspicions as to the *Lawfulness*. And because an *affirmative Conclusion*, as now, cannot follow from *two negative Premises*; and if any *Injury* was done, it was then done; and so long as there remains a Notion of *Right* and *Wrong*, there will remain a Notion of *Restitution*; that Matter may be fully elucidated in a very short View, and in so clear a Point of Light, as to exhibit an absolute Demonstration of its *Lawfulness every Way*. The Thing to be demonstrated, is, the *Divine*, and *Legal Right* of the Settlement after the *Revolution*, I take this Method for it: Whatsoever has a Right to Being, has a Right to the *Means* of Preserving itself in Being; if then, our *Limited Monarchy*, and the *Reformation* of our Religion, are allowed to have a *Divine* and *Legal Right*, they have the *same Divine*, the *same Legal Right* to the Means of Preserving themselves. Now, if after the *Abdication* of K. James, and his embracing the *Romish Religion*, there was no other Means for preserving the other two, but the ensuing *Settlement*; then, is that Settlement as *Legal*, and as much of *Divine Right*, as our Monarchy, or

Refor-

Reformation. That there was no other Means in all the Methods of Human Prudence, and Proceedings of Divine Providence, is extreamly evident from hence, That their never was yet so much as one Sovereign Prince of the *Romish Faith*, in any one Protestant Country, since the Reformation, who did not proceed, according to Power and Opportunity, in Extirpating the Protestant Religion, as if in Duty indispensibly bound to it. This is undeniably true in all the History and Experience of *Protestant Europe*. If one single Instance, upon the nicest Search, could be alledged to the contrary, where it suffered no Disturbance, we might allow it no good Conclusion; we might have some Reason to own, that we represent popish Princes, and our Dangers from them unfairly; but if not so much as one Instance to be produced, we may be exceeding certain we are not mistaken in them, nor in the Measures of our Security against them. And whatever Danger has been, we may conclude ever will be; nay, we may be absolutely certain, as long as *Papery* is what it is, annexing Honour and Salvation to the breaking, not to the keeping Promises with us, it never can be otherwise. That Settlement therefore must be, First, As Legal as if expressly mention'd in the *Statute Laws* of our *Constitution*; because grounded upon a Law superior to all written Laws, PRESERVATION *non est Lex Scripta sed nata*. (2) the *Common Law* of *England* expressly favours it, according to the celebrated *Bracton* * (*de consuetud Angl.*) *Lex facit Regem, non est enim Rex, ubi dominatur Voluntas, & non Lex*. (3) 'Tis agreeable to the *Civil Law*, or *Law of Nations*, as *Grotius de Jur Belli & Pacis* has shewn. Secondly, as much of *Divine Right*, as if expressly set down in the *Sacred Laws of Holy Scripture*; because, it is the express Design of them to preserve all Governments in their Rights and Immunities, and require Homage and Obedience to them so preserved.

THE great End of the *Revolution*, was the Preservation of the Protestant Religion, and to restore our

* Lib. I. c. 4. Sect. 13.

our invaded Constitution in Church and State. If it had not taken Place, all Things must have returned, with unrelenting Compulsion, to the same State we were in before the Reformation. But if that Reformation of Religion is *Lawful*, and of *Divine Right*, then also is the Means, for preserving it of the same Character; and that Means is never to have a Prince; who is an *open Papist*. The Scripture of the *New Testament* by parity of Reason, requires it should be supposed, and received, as a Thing of absolute Necessity, that there be a Change of the Law, in that particular: For says the Author to the *Hebrews*. *There being a Change of the Priesthood there must be of Necessity a Change also of the Law*. Nay, it is as good as actually provided for by the *Antient Law*, that excludes *Lunaticks*. Because *Popery*, in reference to the Sound, Sober Christianity we profess, is, indeed, as much a *Lunacy* in Religion, as the other can be in the Blood. And we are perfectly sure moreover, that it renders a *King* of that *Perswasion* much fiercer and crueller to all Sheep that saporate from the Fold of *Popery*, than any other Lunacy could do; so devoutly raging, and zealously mad, that he is no more a *Shepherd*, but a very *Wolf*. A Change therefore being made in Separating from that Fold, there is a Necessity also of a Change of a Shepherd. No *Popish* Kingdom will allow of a *Protestant* Governor; they have not the Charity to trust him, notwithstanding no one Protestant Doctrine renders it incompatible or unprosperous; and is there any Charity, Sense, or Prudence obliging a *Protestant* Dominion to trust a *Popish* Ruler, when the very *Principles* of that Religion oblige, and constantly stimulate, to its Destruction. Before the *Reformation* the grand Law of Religion, (I mean that of deriving Religion from the *Holy Scriptures*) and the Laws of the Land, were in no Concert; but since, the Laws of pure Christianity are *establish'd* by the Law of the Land. And if there never was heard of a *written* Law to establish the Laws in general (such a Law being universally plain, necessary, and fundamental, no Body need be told of its Obligation and

and Authentickness) need there be one made, That the Wolf ought not, must not, be trusted to keep the Sheep? Did GOD or Man ever do so needless a Thing as to think of enacting or writing down such a Law? Is it not therefore frivolous? Is it not the Spirit of Humour? of a cross-grain'd Conscience? an utter Mistake? palpably Sophistical? to call in question the Legal and Divine Right, of putting such a Law in Practice? All Arguments against such Experience, such Legal and Divine Allowance, must ever more be sophistical and unconcluding. Supposing, for I don't affirm, that the Church of *England* once held a contrary Tenet, from Her composing Her Loyal Directions, to *common* Intent, for the usual, known, Course of Things, and never putting the extraordinary Case of *Ruin*, when the *Foundations are out of Course*; a Case, by the Way, She never ought to put; no *Law*, no *Homily*, nor any Thing, but Time, and Circumstances, are fit to suggest that explicite Particular. The Divine Laws themselves never specify, yet allow of the *Necessity* which makes an explicite Exception in the current Obedience to them. They who will not allow the *Practice* of that Church, when Oppressed in so extraordinary a Manner, or aiding others in the like Circumstances, to explain Her Meaning of the Doctrine sufficiently; yet after a Case of such Necessity, after so long an uninterrupted Experience, ever since the *Reformation*, of the Spirit of *Popery* when got into the Throne, which She could not have written, and determin'd, upon so much Experience, at the first; they must be oblig'd to grant, That if ever She held a contrary Opinion, She must of Necessity admit some change and alteration in it, now.

I HOPE, by this short View, we are clearly appriz'd of, and agreed in, that first Principle of the Love of our Country, and its Preservation. How thoroughly well were we once agreed in it? The *Revolution* was that National, Legal, and Divine, Standard of Preservation, which *Tory* and *Wigg*, unanimously flock'd to, striving to out-rival one another in Speed, and combining to be constant to it, as that which God, Law, and Nature all directed to; *Passive Obedience* and

Non-

Non-resistance, as then practiced by the *Tories*, when all was going to ruin; made excellent *Wiggs*, who pretend to no Release from that Doctrine, but in such a Case: Whoever therefore desert those Colours, desert their own Principle, Choice, and Practice. Say, from whence? What Fountain-head, have all our Feuds and Divisions proceeded? But the *Inconstancy* of the *Tories*, and their Ingratitude for that Deliverance, their proving *Turn-Coin*, in great abundance, from their *invoked* Safety, from repeated *Oaths*, willingly taken. Are we then conscious of any swerving from that noble *British* Principle, directly, or indirectly? whom we had a good Opinion of before, be they never so Noble, or Leading, we must in Conscience relinquish it, and them: A greater Love must extinguish a less, when they are (as in the present Case) incomparable. We loved them once, because we thought their Publick Spirit rightly affected towards the House of *Hanover*, the sole Refuge and only Support or Publick Good; but where-ever we know how much they have strayed, or do stray, from that Principle and Duty, by Deed or Sentiment, in proportion to their changing and altering from that, are we oblig'd to quit and lay down our good Opinion of them: And whilst we change Sides and forsake varying, or deceitful Men, we all the Time, are constant to the Principles of Truth, and Duty. But if we will keep up kind, and honourable Thoughts, and still adhere to 'em in our Minds, by being constant to them, we grow unconstant to our Principles; and by not changing and forsaking them, in lieu of the Character of Integrity, Steadiness, and Constancy in a good Thing, we incur that of quitting, deserting, and being ashamed of it; and all for the miserable Recompence of receiving a Pittance of false Honour from one another, and living in the Vogue of fictitious Constancy with some Acquaintance; not considering, that in the Mean Time, Reason and Scripture, the pressing Obligations of Peace and Submission, and speaking no evil of Dignities, (all which we ought to be constant to) are in Force to condemn us, and are striving to regain us to our Integrity, to prevent our Condemnation.

IF this is the Groundwork of Tenaciousness, viz. because it was once held good and true, and I had a good Reason for thinking so, therefore it can never be otherwise, we may safely conclude it false and insufficient; because the true Inference is, when the Reasons upon which my Opinion was built do change, my Sentiments should change also; else my Notions are deserted of Reason: If they were guilty, you become innocent by disavowing their Tenets, but by defending, you are involved in the Artifices and Nets of their Guiltiness and Slanders. Surely, it is a prodigious Inadvertency, to endure the partial Liking of some *leading* Friends to overcome so many weightier, so many certainer Obligations to the Love of our Country, of Peace and Quierness, of God, of one another. To deem it more Honourable to adhere to them, than to God or any other Duty, and at the same time overlook such a swinging Mistake and gross Evil, argues a very strange Eye-sight; to be sure, it proves Intellectuals disused, or much abused. What is the Spirit of a bad Cause? or its Characteristick? if to resign up our Judgment implicitly to the Guidance of those we favour, against the notorious Evidence of Sense and Experience, the common Reason of our Happiness, the common Precepts of the Bible, is not--- If this is Constancy, what, I beseech you, is Perverseness?--- Where? Whence comes the Honour of it? Did ever any King pass a *Patent* to be immovable and obstinate in the wrong? Let it be the Insaturation! Enthusiasm! or any other Counterfeit, or some Frolick of Constancy! the *true* it never was, is, or can be. For can the Shame and Opprobrium of Constancy become its appendant Glory, or the Celebration of its Verrue? Who can shew a Licence to glory in his Shame, or think that praise-worthy which is criminal? Let me ever covet the Honour of being a *Turncoat* from Error and Faction--- If that is not the truest Measure of Honour, the Character of a Deserter will ever be inglorious, tho' it is from a flagrant Error, or some grand Violation of Duty: Suppose the 40 Persons who conspired against St. Paul had impeach'd one of their Number of Inconstancy, and being a sad Renegado, for relenting and making a

Discovery, I ask whether he was not more constant than all the rest, by timely changing and returning to that Duty, they rashly and passionately departed from? So, in any other proportionable Inadvertency to common Duty, if we don't break loose from that wicked Chain of Party, and the fallacious Reputation of Steadfastness, and grow more tender-hearted to Truth and Peaceableness, if we still purpose to give up our selves to Opposition, and not the uniting Evictions of Truth, we had need be aware, lest we add God and Truth also to the Number of our Enemies. " They are factious, (says the late Archbishop of York, in his excellent Sermon) they are Setters up and Abettors of Parties, who endeavour to destroy, or unsettle, or disparage, or in the least hurt or weaken the Government and the Laws as they are establish'd; let the Principles on which they go, or the Pretences they make, be what they will." To continue in the Party-Disposition of flying off from the affectionate cementing Principles of Submission and Contentment, and chuse to hold out still in that *Contumacia & Dignatio Parendi* Pliny speaks of, the Discord will grow so very ill-temper'd, that, if there could be two different Suns to rule the Day, two different Kings to govern the Land, two several Bibles, two several Gods, one would be chosen and approved of for no other Reason, but because the opposite was by the other. But if we know but of one Sun, one Bible, one God, we should be more cordially united in that *one King*, whom God and the Laws have set over us; and let the Bible of God exert its impartial and all-commanding Jurisdiction, by enforcing and demanding Submission to him, and all put in Authority under him, adequately to the Laws, the settled Measure both of Obedience, and Authority. Good Subjects we never can be, whilst we reserve to pay that Allegiance to our own Party, which is only due to the common Sovereign over both; for it proves us more intent upon our own Profit than Duty, private, than publick Good. Let us advert to that fair Proposal, of being as jealous of our own Ability to govern, as of theirs who do, and be persuaded they see as far into Affairs, (not to say farther into the true Springs of the publick Cour-

(es) one Jealousy would be a Cure for the other; once admit that *next to your Scheme and Measures of Policy those of your Governors are the best, 'tis a decided Case, that they have the real Prebeminence of Worth, on whom the second Vote falls, in the Competition: 'Tis hard to Rule well, but nothing easier than to Obey.*

I have heard some aver, those of one Denomination the best Subjects the King has: A noble Saying, I confess, and worthy of all Acceptation! But it only happens to want one Circumstance, that is to say, Truth. For, unless an untowardly kind and favourable Sentiment for his Majesty's *known* Enemies, and an odd unaccountable Coldness and Disrelish to the most zealous in his Service, and most serviceable in their Zeal; if Riot in some, Perjury in a good many, Strife, Envy, Bitterness, murmuring false things and speaking evil ones, and suffering the *Dissenters* to be more hearty and active in defending the Church of *England*, and in that the *Protestant* Religion, than themselves, be the distinguishing Characteristick of one that vaunts himself for the *Church*, and the best Subject to *King GEORGE*, 'tis readily granted to be their due. But if none have the face to assert that Description of either to themselves, yet make it good in their Practice, I must hope, in a beseeching Air, there is still Room to grow better, and render the Agreement between the Name and the Carriage more tolerable. For really 'tis time to think of coming in for a Share of the good Duty of Passive-Obedience, as well as leave all the Vertue and Praise of it to their hated Adversaries, whilst they engross the empty Title.

IT is amply allow'd above, that Mistake and Inadvertency are incident to otherwise great and good People: But then the Infirmary changes into a wilful Sin, when we have not the Vertue to own and forsake it, as soon as perceiv'd; to persevere immoveably notwithstanding, out of a sham Pretence of Constancy, or other faulty Motives, is to be noted for Perverseness and invincible Stubbornness; and *Stubbornness*, we have read, is as odious to God as *Iniquity and Idolatry*, 1 Sam. 15. 23. If any could with Truth alledge they are absolutely *married* to their Opinion, they might with greater Patience bear the Inconveniencies they have

brought themselves under, rather than acknowledge the Error of their Choice; as 'tis very usual with those who have thrown away themselves in Marriage against the Advice of their Friends, to put the best Face upon the Matter, after they found themselves deceived, sooner than confess the wrong Judgment they made. But to what Purpose should any of us remain wedded to our own Trouble and Mistake, Sin, and Vexation? when we may be so honourably divorced; (Could one single *D. D.* possibly marry so many?) The Divorce is as chaste and virtuous as between a Sinner and his Sin; Conscience, Interest, Happiness, all approve of it, all require it, they all wonder you live so long together. What makes Heresy so bad a thing as it is, but *Pertinacy*? As when considerable Error refuses to be subdued by sufficient clear Light, or demonstrative Divine Authority, continuing to strengthen and confirm it self thro' *Obstinacy* and excessive Fondness, or other base Reasons, the *Innocency* of Error vanishes away, and the *Guiltiness* of it remains. The Fault passes from the Understanding to the *Will*, where it entrenches it self, like a stubborn Offender who scorns to yield, resolves upon a desperate Defence, knowing that Fortress to be inexpugnable.

WHAT Excuse or Extenuation then have they to justify and support themselves for continuing still in a detected Inadvertency? Nor the supposed Reputation of *Steddy*ness; that is wholly taken from them; they can't so much as once more defend themselves behind that Wall, it is levell'd to the Ground: the strong Hold is blown up; if that has been the main *Body of Reserve*, 'tis utterly put to flight.

PERHAPS there are other concurring Causes helping to seduce and constrain to this faulty Tenaciousness. Let us go on to take an imparial View of all that can be imagin'd to influence any Numbers, and shew their Insufficiency, to their Satisfaction.

Secondly It is not defensible in any to say I have been long in that Mind, therefore determine to continue in it. It puts in mind, what an Emperor of *Morocco* said to an *English* Ambassador, after he had been inform'd by him of the Christian Religion and read the Scriptures, 'That truly, if he would change for any Religion

gion it should certainly be for that, but he was not to think of departing from what he had been long used to. We are all of us kind of Emperors in our Minds in this respect; but methinks 'tis Heathenish in a Christian to intend such an Answer, as only serves to detain him in a wilful Opposition to preponderating Truth. Supposing 20 several Religions, and but one of them in the Right, this will be equally good to hold 19 in Error, for one in the Truth: each had that Argument on his Side, it was the Persuasion of his Country, Friends, he was either Educated in it, or long Accustomed to it. This would as soon justify a Turk as a T--- therefore no more to be mentioned on their behalf. I hope they won't offer to justify themselves.

Thirdly, From Opiniatry or Self-conceit, wherein some are wiser than seven Men who can render a Reason: That would be justifying one Fault by another; nor can they.

Fourthly, From having Mens Persons and Judgments in Admiration. For when that is in repugnancy to to a Man's Duty plainly specified in Scripture, this Rule alone without that superior Measure and Regulator, will sometimes lead him to the Wrong, as well as the Right. He ought not to err purposely with any Body, tho' it was a Plato; *Magis amica Veritas*. If one or more leading Men in the Senate, County, Neighbourhood, or Club we belong to, is of sufficient Authority to hearten and confirm a Man still that he is in the Right, against Experience and Matter of Fact, which used formerly to decide all Doubts, against the most evident Scripture moreover, which ought always to controul the Understanding and the Conscience, he has made a fine Complement indeed of them both; thus to resign them up implicitly, and with them his Liberty of Reasoning, and his Senses also, to the Champions, and Company, he has chosen to call *Honest*. Observe some of these Leaders very angry and of a flaming Zeal and Assurance in their Sphere, and you see greater or lesser Circles of People kept from cooling to the Temper of Considering as they ought; what shall we call this siding with Men in Contradiction to God? --- God bids you speak no evil of Dignities, to lead quiet and peaceable Lives; but others lead you

to the reverse, and shew you how to be intractable to those whom God has given Authority over us, to spread false Jealousy against them; how to disquiet your Lives in vain, to hate those that differ from them as tho' they were their Enemies, traduce and injure by all Means in their Power; these are the Men we approve of, and prefer to be govern'd by: Behold your Choice! A strange Option indeed! Where a Man must be accounted of no Principles, if he don't receive the currant Lies and Reflections from one another without ever hesitating at the Credibility, once suspecting the Contrivance; or dares be so independent as to credit his one Eyes or Ears before them, or such a Changeling, to believe one Word the other Party says, though inwardly satisfied of the Truth of it, but like an Apprentice fears to open his Mouth, if it makes against his Masters. If in some Cases, the Impossibility of the Aspersions or Suspicion being true, in others point blank Proof to the contrary, and in others the highest Improbability, are not sufficient to shame the Party Spirit into Silence, it is incapable of receiving reasonable Satisfaction: neither ought they to think of justifying themselves.

Fifthly, From meer Numbers bearing Company; because, we know the Dissuasive from *following a Multitude to do evil*. By that Argument a wicked Man need never Repent, seeing he has enough to keep him in Countenance. Unless Numbers could change Truth into Falshood, or Sin into Duty, they are equally incompetent to vindicate, as for the Weakest to direct the Wisest.

Sixthly, I have heard some excuse themselves by the Lamentation that this Nation is always a divided Nation! Which is such another Argument, as because the Word of Truth says, *it must needs be that Offences come*, he will therefore be one, who shall fulfil it; forgetting what he should most of all remember, *viz. the Woe denounc'd against him by whom the Offence cometh*.

Seventhly, Others would fain extenuate the Matter by *Doubting*; but Doubting in so plain a Case is incapable of assisting them. Of Doubts some are dangerous, some safe; to doubt of the Matters of Fact, and the things we should live by, is an odd affected sort of Hesitation. Say they, there are *Divines* and *Learned Men*

of

of each Opinion, and Books writ on both sides, what should I do therefore ? I will tell you what not only you should, but *must* do ; 'tis as impartial Advice as any in the World, *viz.* That you judge for yourself. You will reply by what Rule ? By the best in the World ; that is, plain Scripture and plain Reason : wherein you may be strong and experienced as the mightiest Disputant, and distinguish between Sollidity and Shew, Words and Sense, Dury and Doubtfulness : the obvious Laws of Obedience, and difference between Good and Evil are the familiar Principles, given to all plain and honest Minds, to judge of the Doctrines and Opinions that concern *their* Sphere, and govern themselves accordingly. But the Sun itself don't shine brighter at Mid-day, (no Cloud in the Sky) than the clear deciding Obligations, in the *Old* and *New Testament* for obeying Governours, and those Authorized by them. If the Cloud of Passion and Prejudice did not intercept, 'tis impossible but they must be seen and submitted to. At the same time it is most apparent unto all Men, what *Divines* have been, or are, most in the Right ; they, who know their Obligations to Holy Scripture, our Church, and their Oaths, yet inconsistently to them all, insinuate Scruples and Dissatisfactions against them ; or like others, supinely silent in removing them, tho' they had the Remedy at their Tongue's end : a Token which the *Adversary* rejoiced in, and construed to their Favour * ; or those other, who are mindful of all those *Ties*, faithfully inculcate a most conscientious Quierness and Submission, when, and where, Discontents and Animosities endanger the Salvation of Souls, and the Peace of the Realm ; and so exemplify how perfectly a good Church-man and a good Subject may consist together ; and contribute to preserve the Honour of their Function, and blunt the Reproach of enslaving and absurd Politicks.

Some may be for defending themselves from owning their Mistake, by the Help of that Maxim of the Law of Nature, *Nemo tenetur accusare seipsum*, no one is ob-

Vide *W. Lord Bishop of Ex'x's moving Charge to his Clergy*, 1716.

liged

liged to accuse himself. But that can have no manner of Application here ; it holds good only where any great Loss or probable Damage may accrue to the Party confessing ; but in the present Case, he can assign no real Inconvenience, he is secured of additional Honours and Commendations, sure of performing a noble Act of Reason and Religion, in doing that *Honour to the Truth*, that the *Truth will honour him*, and *they who despise it shall be lightly esteemed*. From the Instant of his submitting to it, it makes him free, Master of himself, a Friend and Favourite of God.

THE long Indisposition of Prejudice is a general Obstacle to what I have been recommending. Conviction would as certainly follow from Evidence, as Light and Sight from the Sun, if something did not unfortunately intercept : The Habit of contradicting, suspecting, and disbelieving one another, prodigiously distorts the right Apprehension of Things, as a grosser Medium reflects that crooked which is streight. Thus a slight Shew of Probability, seconded by a strong prejudicate Opinion, has a greater Power upon the Mind, than the clearest Demonstration against it. Still if the Evidence is sufficient to over-balance, and rectify the Understanding from the inherent Partiality, the Man is answerable for not framing his Inferences and his Actions accordingly. For, if those Prejudices are the Premises he argues from, whoever chuses the Premises chuses the Conclusion ; which must be Error and Mistake. 'Tis in vain to say, he does not chuse the last, as such, if he does not refuse and forbear what necessarily leads to and keeps him therein ; if the Causes are wilful, the Effects and Consequences are wilfully wicked. A World of Pains is requisite to convince one who is but half-resolv'd against it ; But nothing can satisfy those, who have taken up an *entire* Purpose not to be convinc'd : Arguments can do no more than persuade, but the sullen Resolve renders the Mind imper-suasible, impregnable. Not the best Reasons the thing is capable of, no Argument humane, or divine, can operate, till that resolute Disposition of never examining whether in the wrong or not, begins to give, and grow a little more complaisant to Truth ; the strongest Proof in the World will have no better

Recep-

Reception or Success, than the weakest ; because so far from being reflected on as a Reason, or Discovery of Truth, weak or strong, that it is not canvass'd or consider'd at all. Miracles are unable to force their Way through affected Prejudices, or gain Admission to the most important and beneficial Admonitions. What more kept up the Opposition against our Saviour, than a prejudicate Notion of the *Messiah's* coming as a *Temporal Prince* to free them from the *Roman Yoke* ? This Notion they erroneously gather'd out of *Scripture*, of the *Divine Right* of his *Kingship* ; and having once imbib'd that Poison and Delusion, would unalterably cleave to it, let God or Man bring what Ruin they pleased for it ; freely chusing to be undone, rather than yield themselves in the wrong. *St. Peter* tells them, that through Ignorance they did it, but he would not endure them to think that sufficient to excuse them ; for he charges them in solemn Earnestness to repent of so great a Sin. And in *Luke 4. 16, &c.* we find a strong Prejudice in those of *Nazareth* (where our Lord was brought up and resided longest) against him, as being *Joseph's Son*, an Underling, mean Person ; he there arraigns them of that Injustice against him, and themselves, the not esteeming a Prophet enough in his own Country, by two remarkable Instances of Detriment from it ; one of *Elias*, who in the Famine of above 3 Years, was not sent by God to any of the distressed Widows of his own Country *Israel*, but to a Widow of *Sarepta* in another Country ; and another of *Elisba*, who cured a foreign Lord in *Affyria* of his Leprosy, when there were many Lepers in *Israel*, who would not desire a Cure of him.

NOTHING can be truer, than that the Validity of a prior Judgment or anticipated Decision, by which we immediately judge every thing right that agrees with that, or amiss that disagrees, can be no better than the Grounds that *Prejudice* is built upon ; and if that therefore should be an unequal or undue Standard, it must be evident, we try all things by false Weights and Measures ; and still to judge and esteem by that, exclusive of better Information proffering it self and protesting against it, must be the great Iniquity of judging. We are to go-

vern our selves by the Laws of God, and not the No-
tions of Men, which would *make them of none effect*;
one is disputed, the other unquestionably plain and ob-
vious: If we then give Credit to Opinions which de-
stroy and vacate the Obligation of the former, our
credulous Prejudice will neither excuse from Sin, nor
rescue from Damnation. With regard to Sentiments
of *Persons*, the Prejudiced have so vehement a Desire
and Interest that ill things should be true, 'tis no won-
der that Desire begets a Suspicion, and that Suspicion
an Assurance in many, that they are true. The Tran-
sition between a Facility to believe and actual Decep-
tion, is not more common, than it is impercep-
tible; and it will ever be easy for the Artifices of De-
ceivers to mislead, and difficult on the other hand to
recover Subjects, so long as the Party-Prejudice re-
tains an usurping Power of believing whatever is plea-
sing and agreeable to it self: suppose any wicked e-
nough to invent vile Aspersions, and most uncharitable
Improbabilities, there will be enough weak and un-
thinking Retailers of that vicious Gratification; nor
can there be any Remedy, or Hope, of its being other-
wise, till they recal their Minds to the Ways of Think-
ing, and of having greater Regard to Truth apparent,
than Party; to ask and stay for Proof, and suspect eve-
ry prejudicial Hearsay without it; fairly letting Expe-
rience have more Weight than Railing; and so escape
the Wise Man's Imputation, *He that believeth every
Word is simple.* Is the King's Majesty and his Ministry
inferior in Authority to one of your selves, that they
meet with so much worse Treatment? Do you hold
it unjust to believe every thing of these, till you have
examin'd the Grounds? Let the former but have the
same common Justice and fair Play----- They have a
Right to demand it, as much as to live: their Title
to it is sacred; the Payment on our Part indispensable.
Whilst the contrary Censures is Arrogance in private
Persons, noxious to our selves and others, *earthly, de-
vilish*; a devilish Departure from Civility, as well as
Christianity. Tho' 'tis more disrespectful to aggravate
their Failings than others, they will forgive the Disre-
spect, upon Condition, you can shew your selves not
mistaken and imposed upon in your Imputations a-
gainst

gainst them. Governours can no more be exempt from all Failings than private Subjects; but examine and search diligently into their publick Vertues, (the Qualities which make us all safe and happy) and there will be little need of Candour for concealing or extenuating what is found amiss; nor is there any peculiar Occasion for it, upon other Accounts.

IN securing so essential a Blessing as the *Protestant Succession*, we might well been contented to hope, or enjoy'd less Princely Endowments in the next *Protestant Heir*; but when they are illustriously firm and regular, awful, yet engaging, in the Exercise; since Experience exceeds the Fame, which had been scan'd too for 15 Years before by the Disaffected, the World abroad admiring, almost reverencing his Excellencies, and his Enemies not refusing him that Justice in the Height of their Anger; it is the more singular Infamy in any Subjects to grow evil because he is so very good. Are they provoked most at his Vertues? Or at viewing the firm System of so many Blessings, and the lasting Fabrick of National Happiness built, as at present, upon strong, beautiful, numerous Pillars?

THERE are but two things can raise the Foundation of Murmuring, either a real Cause of Complaint, as Misgovernment, Violation of Laws, or else some Artifice or other in blowing up Discontents; the Imposture of false Intimations and vile Slander is the concerted supply of the first, and designing Men are but too expert in the management; for encreasing the Number of Discontents: Some supinely believe, as they do any thing else that is told them; some spitefully, suborn'd by Party Opposition; some gratify their Resentment; some their Envy; some their Interest, and projected Scheme of Strength and Power encreasing; others to cover their Guilt, *iram atque animos a crimine sumunt*; others to serve the Popish Religion: Now, if the former real Cause of Murmur can't be shewn, it remains, that it must be upheld by these wicked Wiles and Artifices, and that ill-designing Men cherish and nurse up Faction and Disquietude among those, who still give up their Understanding to them, for no better Reason but because they used to do so; how easy is it to infuse their own angry

Passions and Prejudices? and by their Example and
 Aspersions prevail to bear them Company in the
 Guilt and Irreligion of disobeying Governours, and
 be jealous and uneasy because the other won't be
 contented to be happy, till their Ambition, Envy or
 Revenge are contented. The Manner of Spirit they
 are of, from instructed Prejudice, makes them easy and
 willing to be imposed on, and proffers it self to be
 workt up into Passion for nothing; thus wretchedly
 are they enticed out of their Duty and Quiet, and
 Regard to Truth. *To the Pure all things are pure, but
 to the Defiled (with Prejudice) is nothing pure.* They
 reflect not on the customary Delusion and Unrighteous-
 ness of inferring from a Particular to a General, *i. e.*
 because a few held such Opinion, therefore all; other
 few did so once, therefore always; they give Credit
 to one Sect or Parry, therefore believe them impli-
 citely in all things; have withdrawn their Cre-
 dit from another, therefore believe them in nothing,
 how true and undeniable soever--- The Power of a
 common Proverb or *Nickname* has been able to bar
 out the most penetrating Conviction. *Can any good
 thing come out of Galilee?* defy'd all that our Saviour
 could do--- So, the *W---* are *Republicans*, *Enemies to
 the Church*, tho' continually disavowed and disdain'd
 by them, and no Proof given of it since the Com-
 mencement of that Name, under King Charles II. All
 the Evidence lying in the Speculation of gain-saying
 People. And if they will still persist in the Calumny,
 they are unavoidably *self-condemned*, *false Accusers of the
 Brethren*; wrong their own Faculties, and belye a
 long Series of Experience. To fret and vex because
 the Administration of Affairs is not amiss, that they
 may be able to justify their unsupported Jealousies and
 Murmurs, is to act the Part of Traitors to the Pub-
 lick, and wish it Injury, in order to countenance their
 Accusations. Can wishing a Man *may* prove a Knave
 ever justify their calling him one? If their artificial
 Slander and Jealousy have their Foundation in time to
 come, 'tis a plain Confession there is nothing at pre-
 sent to support their Pretences, and clear Demonstra-
 tion, that they who are so desirous to find an Occasion
 against them, can find none. 'Tis as easy for the
 Spite-

Spiteful to surmise any Improbability for the time to come, as to wish ill: but when they are reduced to their *may be* to carry on the Indictment, it must end in an *Ignoramus*; it *may not be* is the fittest Confutation. To draw *Chimeras* out of their present State of Non-existence to serve a present Resentment, and palm them for Realities, is hateful Juggling, gross Imposture, and a perpetual Source of Animosity and Misunderstanding. It is the common Trick of Impostors for covering Collusion the better, to cry out to the People, *beware of Cheats*,-- of no Friends to *Monarchy*, and *Episcopacy*, whilst they are slightly beguiling them into Measures inevitably destructive of *Protestant Episcopacy*, and *limited Monarchy*. And as the Managers know in their Conscience, they have made Lies their Refuge, there is a laudable Way to be even with them, *viz.* by deceiving the Deceivers, and disappointing them of the Credit they depend upon. Let the judging Faculties of their Followers be their own so long, as to require Proof, the Cheat would out, and their Loyalty, and Content all come right: Make the Experiment of withdrawing Deference, weigh light Surmises against notorious Facts, all the great and material things which the *W---* have suggested of the *T---* have proved true in Fact, and what these have surmised of the other, as constantly false, this is a fair Appeal and clear Trial, and of so many Years Evidence, (not to mention how the late *Rebellion* has drawn the Curtain of concealed Treason, and shewn the Actors and Prompters) it ought to rectify every wrong Judgment, convince them of Impostition, and entirely dissipate Prejudice and Disunion. Admit this equitable Measure and Hope of Reconciliation, how many Mens Hearts would smite them for entertaining Reproaches? which they were never able, tho' challeng'd so oft, to make any Proof of, when it was so very grateful and serviceable to have them made good; to instance,

THE pious Fraud of the Danger of the *Church*, that grand Seminary of Fears and Jealousy; the Directors of Faction would be bankrupt in Scandal, if they had not recourse hither: but what Token or Proof, I beseech you, can they exhibit of it, or resemblance
of

of a House falling * 2. Unless it is the building of new Churches, and well endowing them, and all other wise Care and Governace since the Revolution †. Can they point out so much as one Act or Measure of State prejudicial of her Welfare, or a single evidence of Injury or Disfavour, or Alteration in her Laws, or Revenues? *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*, impossible to be the greatest Enemies to her before it can be shewn they have done one Act of Diskindness. If all the Allegations of Danger and Insecuriry for so long a time have continually been found a designed Abuse, void of all pretences to Truth, what Reason has any Man of common Sense, but to conclude the present of the same Kind? Never was Creduliry Parent of a more frivolous Fear. What a more fictitious or preposterous Jealousy, than to run on headstrong in sounding a false Alarm for so many Years together? making themselves and others miserable and uneasy, in the vain Imagination; when nothing is certain thro' all that time, than, in the Scheme of those who foment those Suggestions, the only Answer to the Question when the Church is safest, is when *Papery* is in the fairest way to be re-established, considering who is loudest in the Remonstrance, and the less Hopes of that, the more confidently the other has been talkt into Jeopardy, the louder, at times, the Cry: Have not the *Papists* always joined their Subtlery, and used their utmost Efforts in this continued Stratagem? 'Tis not a parcel of designing or disgusted Subjects crying out Help, Help.— i. e. We are undone if you don't, good People, believe our story and befriend us with your Creduliry and Discontent, that carries with it the Proof of Distress or Danger, no more than one crying Fire in the Street, yet can't make out where it smokes: the Cry will amaze and raise the Palpitation of Heart, a little while, but the Amazement, as soon as no Danger can be shewn, turns upon the Cryers, and excites Indignation at the feigned Fear; so let it, so ought the Anger to be spent in the other Case, when all the world

* *Vide* Dr. Hole's Sermon. *Act-Sund.* at Oxford, 1716.

† *Vide* Bp. of ELY's Thanksgiving-Sermon, 1716. 11th Edition. Who more proper to bear Testimony, than such an experienc'd, discerning, pious Prelate?

knows *Non apparere & non esse idem est*, none need be ignorant unless they please, that all the bruited Fears and Jealousies are actually compounded out of disappointed Ambition, and other Malignant Ingredients; take these away, that is gone. In a Matter of so great Condemnably and suspected Design, the Reporters are very simple if they expect to be believed out of Courtesy and Civility, according to the *Italian Complaisance il credere e di Cortesia*, but from some appearance of Evidence; to be without Testimony in a Case of *Fact*, and so open to Proof, is to be without Reason, and consequently can be guilty of no less than a railing *Accusation*.

TILL some evidence of that sort is offered, Clamours to the contrary prove nothing but a disappointment of their own Wishes of finding some Occasion against them upon that Article; it will abundantly satisfy the World, that the Word *Church* is worn as a Cloak of Maliciousness and base Purposes, to cover the poverty of Christianity, in as many, as make a ridiculous Profession and Noise of believing in the Church, before they give any real sign of believing in God, or *Christ*; by impious Perjury, by ridiculing the Spirit of Moderation, Meekness, Quietness and Christianity; by others, the refuse of the People. The designing Men, those *Church-Magicians*, know two things very well, that the Multitude who are well meaning, are not the most discerning, easy to be imposed on by well suited Artifices; the other they make Advantage of, is the Fondness for the *established Church*; nothing has a nearer Approach to their Passions than a Concern for that, the very Colour of a Colour of Danger there, is enough to alarm their Imagination, pervert and deprive them of the Power of judging soberly: they find their Account in this, and therefore, when they want the Substance, dress up the Shadow, and set the Phantome a stalking about the Kingdom, to fright and do Feats among the People.--- The Fallacy, all the time, consisting in this; they have combined together to surname themselves the *Church*, and till they flourish and are received into Royal Favour, it can never prosper, nor the Nation be wholly free from the Impertinence of its Danger.--- But all Arguments must vanish before Matter of Fact

to the contrary, and be accused of Falacy and Lying ; has not every beneficial Act for her Prosperity, since the *Revolution*, been advised, carried on, and accomplish'd by those, whom they would abuse all the World in calling *no Friends* to her,? and by the impudent *Asperſion* both contradict their own Conſciences, and other Peoples Senſes.-- I never heard of any Exception to the contrary, except the uſeleſs *Schiſm* Bill ; nor any Interruption to Proofs of inviolable Friendſhip, for almoſt 30 Years ſtanding. The ſuppoſed Danger from Immorality, Deiſm, Socinianiſm, &c. is common to the Church of Chriſt in general, to every National Church, and not more peculiar to ours than others.

WHEN a falſe Accuſation is brought againſt any, there can be no ſurer Confutation, than to ſhew them uncapable of committing the Thing. (1.) As to the King, it has been obſerved, that his Principles (being originally *Lutheran*) ſets him at a greater diſtance from favouring *Calviniſts*, i. e. in other Words, the *Diſſenters* in this Nation, than if he had been Home-born in the Communion of the Church of *England*. The *Pretender* well knew his own deſtructive and irreconcilable Principles, and the little Credit to be given to his Promiſes to the contrary ; he was ſo fair in his *Declaration* as not in plain Words to ſtipulate one for her Protection ; a very ingenuous Bite, I confeſs, to draw Folks into a good Opinion of him, from his great Sincerity in telling them he can't be their Friend. (2.) 'Tis equally impoſſible for the Glorious *Ministry* under King GEORGE to be guilty of the Accuſation, becauſe the Safety of the Church is an implicated and eternal Reaſon of State, that ſettles her perpetual Stability ; let who will be uncharitable to divest them of a ſincere Inclination, Malice it ſelf can't reſuſe them the Reputation of a tranſcending Genius in the other: No, they love their *Royal* Maſter too ſincerely, to adviſe him, at any time, to break his *Oath*, or impair one of the main Pillars of his Throne. Beſides, who can doubt his Maſteſty's certain and peculiar Care of the Church at Home ? (to which he has ſolemnly obliged himſelf) when we ſee ſo indulgent a Specimen of it, in retrieving from Ruin a *Copy* of the Church

of

of *England* abroad, *viz.* the Protestant Episcopal Churches in *Great Poland* and *Polish Prussia* *; when under no Tie to recommend and promote their Interest, but that of his Love and Kindness to those Churches, as being a *Relation* to ours.

(3.) 'Tis morally impossible for the *Dissenters* to prevail over the *establish'd* Church, consequently no Apprehension of Danger can ever be verified from that Quarter. They are in no possibility of prevailing either by Force, or by Argument; never by the *former*, because at Home they are disconcerted, and but few when conjoined together, in Comparison of the Members of the Church; and from Abroad they can hope for no Assistance, like the *Papists*, being *Aliens*, condemned by all the World for their Separation; as for their *Arguments*, there is still less Fear, being confuted in Meekness, and most strenuously routed by *W--- Divines*. If these, among others, are essential and irrefragable Reasons, for Satisfaction, yea for general Confidence in this Point, where's the Provocation? the Grounds of Anger? of Murmur? of Distrust? Where the Refuge of not owning a Mistake and Inadvertency in this Case also?

Eleventhly, I can think but of one Pretext more, *viz.* the Exclusion, for the present, of some out of Trust and Favour. A sore Grievance! But I would placidly ask, whether it was not their own Conduct brought it upon them? If it was, their own Conduct may also remove it. An Alteration in that would gradually affect an Alteration in the other; as soon as they put off Chagrine, and put on more Temper, and Moderation of Envy, think it their Duty, Interest at least, to shew themselves Subjects equally deserving with others, in Capacity, Quietness, *active* Loyalty, from this Day forward, they will not fail of their Deservings, in due time, if they faint not. But is it not a strange Method of clearing a doubted Integrity, to be guilty of an After-management, which instead of removing, di-

* *Vide* The KING's Brief, bearing Date *March 23.* second Year of his Reign, and the *Archbishop* and *Bishops* Circular Letters, &c.

rectly serves to confirm former Suspicions? Every body surely had, and now has, the Opportunity to shew, *as to one*, the Suspicion has been groundless; but to neglect that Opportunity always, is as if Railing to a Man's Face was the surest Way to convince him, of never disaffecting him behind his Back. If they won't yet, yet, sever themselves from the Guilty, and the Suspected, by making a publick Draw-back of the good Opinion they used to export to them, who can judge them entirely innocent? Can a King, a Foreigner, be blamed, if they never yet vouchsafed to do any thing to convince him sufficiently he has been mistaken in them? When the Prodigal Son is returned, 'tis time enough to kill the fatted Calf, be merry, put on Robes and Ring; whilst the other Son, who was always dutiful, and never transgressed his Father's Will, nor acted against his Interest, will nevertheless be entitled to that Praise and Reward, *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine*. Before the other can be equall'd, or come in for a Part, he must return, confess his Error, and be studious of redeeming what he has done amiss, by the Zeal and Eminency of his After-carriage.

THE great Weakness and Inexcuseableness of the Disatisfaction, under Consideration, tho' the Flower of their Pretences, will be more apparent from the following Reflections. (1.) How few in compassion are really interested and affected in that Complaint? (2.) If they will be generous enough to acknowledge this, (shame must hinder from refusing) *viz.* That they are, upon the whole, acted more by publick Spirit, than private Views and Interest. Do they hold indeed to that Declaration? Then ought they to be indifferent who are the Instruments of publick Service; but if concerned and out of Humour, that that they are not employed, and dislike the publick Happiness meerly because they don't like the Hands they receive it from, they plainly prefer the Instruments before the End, and themselves to the publick Good, and so are inconsistent with their Pretences; the Discontents are the Actions of insincere, selfish Subjects, the Declaration of sincere honest, quiet ones. (3.) If they will shew the publick Interest to be out
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of Countess, there will be Reason to hear their Complaint, that they also may have a Hand in the Profit and Honour of administering better. (4.) Suppose a Master of a House has but *six* Places, and *eleven* Competitors, whoever gives Favours, when there is an Impossibility of giving to all, makes choice of his faithful Friends; if *five* must go without, and some be displeased, and the Question who? 'Tis soon resolved. (5.) If this is the chief Ground of Opposition, and Ill-will, to those in Authority, as who in his Heart does not know it? We have got an obvious sure Test to discover the Imposition, and distinguish whether the Clamours of Men proceed from the Conscience of another's Right, the Faults in governing, or their own Want of Power and Authority. Do the T--- generally confess, that all Things had remain'd quieter, if the King had taken *them* into the Ministry, all had been safe, right, just, and good? All who profess this Principle of Animosity, effectually define themselves actuated by Baseness and Sordidness, and that they have no *real* Concern for Truth, Conscience, or the Duty of a Subject; the Profession undoes them and their Cause with all considerate People. But they are for the shortest Cut to Ruin, whom Disappointment and Spite have purely instigated to turn their Thoughts to be more satisfied about the *Pretender's* Right, than before. 'Tis just as if so many Folks were resolving to throw away what they had already, because they have not more; and rather than be balk'd of what they set their Minds on, supinely dislike not those Measures, which must infallibly destroy their present Enjoyments, as well as their Hopes; before they consent, any should exceed them in Posts and Preferment, chuse to equal themselves in Misery with them; and sooner than not get a Victory over an Adversary or Rival, be free to bury themselves in the same Grave --- As to *Nonjurors* pretending Conscience for their Disloyalty to his present Majesty, there is this Test of Discrimination. If they sincerely refuse to take the Oaths out of *Conscience* and Fear of *Damnation*, that Principle, wherever true, will equally awe them from other heinous Sins: But where you see any of them live in habitual Drunkenness, Malice, Calumny, &c. (no unfrequent Case) it may be

concluded that something else besides Conscience has sway'd, and does sway, them to the Refusal of the Oaths. Sir Tho. Moor, one of the first that had Scruples about the King's Supremacy, said, *he was content to be Heretical, if it should prove to be so without a Party, or Proselyting others to his Opinion*; but were we to judge by the Nonjurant Clergy, and others, not content to enjoy Personal Quiet, unless they infect and Disquiet others, congregate Assemblies, and perpetuate Sedition, one would think their Conscience was all Cant, and their Faith Faction, to do all, in their Power, to deliver the Church to the Pope, and the State to the Pretender. Poor Narrow-Soul Men! to make the very Essence of Christianity (a Kingdom not of this World) to depend upon a State-Question, of their own Starting, about a single Person's Right to a Crown; to live in the notorious guilty Omission of not Praying for King GEORGE, when the Christian Religion obliges us *to pray for our Enemies, for Kings and all that are put in Authority*, and the Jews under their Captivity practised both out of Interest, as well as Duty, according to that Sacred Advice, *that by praying for the Life of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babilon, and for the Life of Belthshazer his Son, that their Days may be upon the Earth as the Days of Heaven; the Lord will give us strength and lighten our Eyes, and we shall live under his Shadow and find Favour*. For excluding too out of Heaven not only his Majesty's faithful Subjects, but Abundance of their own Friends and Well-wishers (unkindly done) by their turbulent nonsensical Notions of *Shism*. (6.) Since it might have been predicted from the Temper and Strife of our Party-Divisions, that one would get the final Mastery over the other; and every one had taken their Side, first made a Judgment of the Publick Safety, then of their own Interest and Prospects, 'tis now necessary to submit, as unto Fortune, and give a decent *Exit* to the vain Struggle; *Sic Fata volunt*. Is it your Chance to draw a Blank in the Lottery? Be content; 'tis unreasonable to envy those who have got the Prizes, so fairly drawn.

WHEN a People are so divided, there are but three Ways possible to unite together and become one; either that the *W---* come down to the *T---*, or the

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T--- move up to them, or meet one another Half-Way, in pitching upon Referees: the *First* is impracticable, because it obliges to join in the Guilt of Unchristian Murmur and Disatisfaction against Governours; if the T--- would condescend to the *third* Expedient, and pitch upon the plain Counsels of Holy Scripture for obeying Rulers, and speaking no Evil against them, there can be no Referee so impartial or authoritative, the Difference and Distinction would cease; as soon as they will please to unite themselves to their Duty, and be reconciled to obey the Commandments of God, they are united and reconciled to the W---; let them once be so candid and religious to agree to this Compromise, and they entirely perform the *second* thing wanted and desired, of *coming over to the W---* There is no Room to demur, when Necessity, Duty, and Emolument all determine to it. And seeing no Preences of Constancy and Stedfastness; nor of being long of such a Mind; nor good Opinion of one self; nor of others, the greatest Leaders; nor Numbers; nor the Commonness of Parry and Divisions; nor affected Doubting; neither the Plea of not accusing one self; nor the Power of Prejudice; neither the groundless Jealousy about the Church; nor fretting about Places, are of any Validity (as has been shewn) to excuse or extenuate their Delay, what Concern, yea what Indignation for being so long imposed on, yea what Fear of having sinned, yea what Desire of returning speedily to the Duty of a quiet Subject, ought to fill the honest and reflecting Heart?

EVERY one indeed has the Liberty to remain still in the Vexation of confuted Error, but no other Reason for it. And if they will abuse their Liberty at that unconscionable Rate, the Misfortune heightens into Folly, their Inadvertency grows wilful, and settles in downright Obstinacy. And as it is said with good Reason, *the Wilful never want Woe*; I will lay down some certain Signs and Criteria of Obstinacy, where Constancy ends, and that begins; shew some ill Effects of it; and conclude.

1. THE first Mark of Obstinacy is, when the Thing or Truth in dispute, is decided and adhered to by the *Will*, and not by the Reason or Understanding.

A Man may deal by his Understanding as he does by his Eye ; when any thing comes in his Way, which he hates, or has been wont to dislike, he turns it away, or blinks as if he did not see it : Thus, tho' it does not depend upon the Will to see that green which is blew, or that red which is yellow, yet it depends upon us whether we will turn the Eye and Discernment of the Mind, so long towards it, as to distinguish and be set right about it. If things then are not what we please, but what they are in their Nature and Verity, however we mistake them ; and we will not let the Understanding attend so long, as to find out the Mistake, 'tis pretty plain, we have wound our selves into an implicit Resolution, nor be convinced or undeceived about the Matter. And for so long as the Will is the only Principle for being addicted to such an Opinion, you have to deal with that worst Temper of Mind, *Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris*, tho' you have persuaded them with the most abundantly sufficient Reasons for departing from it, you are still as far off as ever from prevailing. Thus the sullen *Stoick* of old, when he had nothing to reply to him that was convincing him, cried, *O damned Villain !* So the *Jews* of old were ready with their Stones and Reproaches against our Saviour, and his Disciples, when they had nothing else to respond. So a *Jew* of late Years at *Oxford*, when he was in Disputation confounded with the Truth, and had nothing to answer, cried for Madness, and was pale with Vexation, but still continued a *Jew* : and a *Quaker*, under the same confused Circumstances, is said to answer a Bishop of this *Dioceß*, Peter, *convince me if thou canst !*

2. ANOTHER shrewd Cognisance is, when it is thought a Reflection upon a Man's Understanding to be mistaken ; this makes him imagine it more reputable to adhere to his former Opinion (right or wrong) than be constant to Truth : Thereupon grows peremptory, impatient to hear others differ from him, and turns his Back upon the reconciling Vertues of Deference, Gentleness, and being favourable to other Mens Reason, as well as his own. Of all the Properties belonging to our Species, we are ever most solicitous to hide, at least not to own, Defects, Mistakes,

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in conceiving or inferring Right, Misinformation, or Inadvertency in the Understanding; we are sooner brought to acknowledge Imperfections and Weakness in any Part, than there: Yet how many Imperfections natural, or acquired, is it really subjected to? Whilst every one is contented with his own Share, and speaks of no Want: 'Tis too painful and diminishing to be found mistaken in the false Imagination of the World. Observe in Wagers, 'tis the Loss of the Victory, in being in the Right, more than of the Money, that commonly troubles; and in any Matter of Contest or Dispute, if one of the Litigants will but begin once to yield that the other is in the Right, it often pleases so well, that the inflexible Man before, will be apt to return the Compliment, and be ready to submit to the Yielder. But some mean, I should say, proud Souls, are so incapable of being mistaken, and so very positive, that you may sooner persuade a tall Man he is lower by a Foot, or One low, that he is so much higher, than that he is deceived, notwithstanding we can no more alter Truth by our Conceits, than add one Cubit to our Stature. So far is Obstinacy from being a Sign of a strong Judgment, that it is constantly an Evidence of the contrary; your weakest People are always most noted for it, *they are sure it is, because it is so*; nor is it an uncommon Thing to be confident, when they are most mistaken.

3. ANOTHER Sympton is, when a Man thinks himself bound to use some shew of Reason and Argument, not because his Opinion is really built thereon, or nor refuted; but because he is resolv'd to *hold that Opinion*; he catches at every Thing that offers to support him in it, and gives Audience to all Proof and most convincing Arguings to the contrary, as he would to a *Temptation*, which he thinks himself bound to resist; if no other Way, by stopping his Ears, or running away from it.

4. YOU may call it another Token of Obstinacy, when a different Opinion is defended by obscure Texts against plain: Probability, or *may be's* against the most certain and irrefragable Proofs, or by an Appearance of Reason and Argument against Experience: Absurdity has in truth no other Defence but that of Obscurity.

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3- ANOTHER Characteristick of that, and of the Dereliction of the Vertue of Constancy, is, when People are sway'd by other Motives and Affections than those of Truth and Duty, Unity, and Charity; where they will neither Read nor Converse, if they could help it, but on one Side; resolving neither to put themselves in the Way, nor dispose their Minds for the Eviction of an Error, which they have not the Vertue to quit, when they perceive it.

With respect to the Consequences of such a determin'd Obstinacy they are deplorable; but, as it now happens, pernicious only to themselves; *the last Error is abundantly worse than the first.* For a resolute Neglect of that supremely rational Duty of using the Eye of the Understanding to discern and set us right, God often gives the Man, and his Understanding, over to a *reprobate*, undiscerning, injudicious Mind, *ὁ δὲ ἀδόκιμος*. A Mind without Judgment is worse than Eyes without Sight: There may be the Appearance of a fair Eye, as in the *Gutta Serena*, yet destitute of Sight; so in respect of some Things, you may keep Company with a Mind that has the Presence of Rationality and the Looks of Judgment, yet void of Discerning; and this would be more amazing than the other, if it was not more common. When this acquired Blindness has overspread the Faculties, the Man becomes incurable to Reason, and lost to Persuasion; the very Powers of Reasoning so often balk'd of their Purpose, and violently detain'd from their proper Use, are enfeebled, supinely stupid, and unreflecting in that particular Case; like a Man who has tyed up his Joynts so long as to have lost the Exercise of them. To offer Violence to Truth, or its discovering Faculty, is the same as to offer it to God; and he who gives us our Understanding partakes of the Indignity, and interests himself so much in the Affront, as to *give them over to strong Delusions, to believe a Lye*, and readily acquiesce under Absurdity and Contradiction (the Nonsense of the Understanding :) for a Recompence of perversly stifling Conviction, and baffling the directing Powers, of his bestowing, 'tis just with him to suffer them to loose their Direction. Thus 'tis no wonder, that *Seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; speak-*
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ing. Lyes in Hypocrissi, giving good Words with their Mouth, but Curse with their Heart ; or that the Way of the Fool is right in his own Eyes. So sad and miserable are the Effects of believing nothing but what one has a mind to, and prevaricating and winking hard against the Truth : Prejudice with Animosity, Infatuation with Perplexity, Trembling with anguish of Mind, take the Government of such Folks, and become their Malady and Punishment ; and whilst Reason and Religion have lost their Interest in their Minds, they fall into an Indolence as to their Duty, and are lead, with their own Consent, into Inconsistencies which they never blush at, and Dangers they are insensible to, being Fool-hardy against their own Happiness, and the Means conducing to it. To do despite unto Truth is certainly a very guilty fatal Thing : The *Jews* are Witnesses and Warnings all the World over, how the Judgment of Obstinacy overtakes the refractory Opposers of it ; the Scripture testifies that their Fathers were oft put to silence, and not able to answer, or daring to ask any more Questions, yet remain'd unyielding and invincible in their bafled Opinion : They still refuse their Remedy, and close their Heart against the most mighty Conviction, and for that Obstinacy are the Contempt and Aversion of the World, a Curse, an Hissing, and a Proverb of Disgrace.

HOW necessary therefore is it for all Persons to be tender of sinning any more preverfly against peaceable and perspicuous Truth ; but stop perillently, lest by proceeding one Step farther, they fall into that Obstinacy which is incurable ? For every Day they continue in it, they repeat it, and every Repetition incenses Heaven, and threatens a Curse. From the World it always meets with the highest Punishment : in Civil Jurisdiction it incurs an *Outlaw*, in Ecclesiastical, *Excommunication* : And what does Obstinacy against the Judgment-Sear of Reason, Law, and Truth deserve, if persever'd in after publick Admonition, but a Decree for reserving their Title to Reason, for using it so simply and abusing it so inhumanly. If [within three Months] they don't by Word, or Writing, declare they have been Mistaken, they are worthy to bear the Name, *i. e.* the Reproach of T--- for ever. Let them

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dispute against Motion whilst they are moving; let the *Papists* still deceive them; the Protestants pity and pray for them; the *W---* preserve them against their Wills. If all the World don't hiss at them, they may expect all Kings will malign them, for prevaricating their Passive Obedience, and grudging their Duty to the greatest King, that ever yet made this Nation happy. How can they above all Men, wonder at, or condemn the Dissenters of Obstinacy, for differing and dividing for the sake of indifferent Things, both agreeing at the same time in Fundamentals? when they themselves, (agreed as they say in the Foundation of Civil Government, the present Settlement,) make Feuds and Divisions for who shall be in the *Ministry*; a Matter *indifferent* to the Body of private Subjects, and no one can pretend it Matter of *Conscience*; 'tis their Conduct, nor their Preferments, we have any Concern in.

AND now upon due Consideration of the whole, what Truth does most concern us, what Regard we ought to pay it; how the Wisdom of us forgetful Creatures in respect to our Duty in general, consists in being sensible of our Folly, and confessing our Errors and Trespases; that nothing is more noble and philosophical, finer as a Gentleman, or more Religious as a Christian, than to yield to Truth perceived, to change ones Mind, to amend one self, and forsake an unjustifiable Part, and enjoy the mighty Comfort of Mind in reflecting I was once wrong, now am right, that none can say I *am* now refractory to Governours, but that I *was* so; that Constancy does so entirely consist with a Change from Wrong to Right, Disobedience to Peace, as to be a perpetual Honour and Duty; and that all other pretended Steadiness is inglorious, sinful, factious; that upon a strict Enquiry into the Allegations and Aspersions which have kept up Resentment and Jealousy, there is not one Word of Proof, nor Instance of Fact, but all vulgar Delusion; and that we are more firmly certain it is so, for having doubted and examined, *nulla sunt firmiora, quam quæ ex dubiis facta sunt certa*; that there is no one single Excuse sufficient to skreen Men in their present Perverseness, or mitigate their Discontents; that the Signs of Obstinacy are
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very plain, and the Effects of it very evil, that it has Degrees, and is insensibly progressive to that which is incurable. And if so easy, honourable and ingenuous an Action, as acknowledging one's Mistake, would presently redress the past, prevent future ill Consequences, and establish Unanimity, who can be so hardy to refuse, or delay the Expedient? When Religion, Reason, Interest, and all the Benefits of Unity solicit, and perswade to it, the Love of Peace, the Duty of letting go Divisions, the Conscience of an Oath, oblige and importune; and the Dictates of Honour and Ingenuity, the assurance of Applause without, and of Peace within, constrain to it. Besides, there are great Privileges attend such an ingenuous Confession; for an open Acknowledgment, in Conjunction with a faithful making it good, is of so much more Advantage than a silent Change of Behaviour, that it actually sets a Man back five or six Years: 'tis like Restitution to the Publick, for the Injury of an erroneous Opinion, meet to wipe out Transgressions against it; when the corrupt Matter begins to run out of the fester'd Sore in a visible Quantity, it presently heals. What Method better becomes those who hold Places, that they may eat the Bread of the Government with a grateful Mind? 'Tis not only the best Days Work for them, but in general for all others, who have opposed the publick Measures, by their Active Endeavours, or by their Neutrality and Indifference, to make this wise and generous Revocation of their Carriage, solemnly protesting against the like Inadvertency on their Part for the future: all who really and consistently are, what they call themselves, *Hanover T---*, have no more to do, but declare, wherever they come, *that they have been W--- all this time, but did not know it*; this would at once disimbitter their Minds from Party-Passion, and recover them to the suspended Blessing of God, of having *the Spirit of Love and of a sound Mind*: They would deliver themselves, out of Hand, from artificial Falshoods, and the mischievous Spirit of Suspicion; they would resign up Opposition, for good and all; be freer in Joys and Praises hitherto hesitated; follow any Trade but that of *State-mending*, since there is so little to be got by it; instead of Slandering and Murmuring, they

would reprove all guilty of it hereafter; in lieu of wishing to see any turn'd out, because they are grown popular, and beloved, for their eminent Wisdom; and Fidelity, to their King and Country, they would join all their Faculties and Assistance to support them in that best Capacity of serving the Publick; in a Word, they would not only learn to bear better, but rejoice in, the Eminency of their Vertues; which bring in all advantageous Supplements and Securities to a bad Peace, and with them Universal Prosperity, Safety, and not merely retrieve, but *encrease*, the *British* Glory and Puissance. The Country Gentlemen themselves would all become Courriers, deserting their old Maxim of opposing the *Court*, right or wrong, when now they see it the reigning Fashion there, to espouse and cherish the *Country* Interest.

FOR now the blessed Time commences, for diffusing a new Genius into all Ranks among us, for digging up the Root of old Party-Division, and laying the Foundation of Peace and Tranquillity for Ages and Generations. The *Hopes* of *Popery*, that incessant Factor for every Discord here, which has had Life and Vigour to plot and project under Nine Successive Reigns, begins now to sicken, despair, and dye, at the Prospect of the *present* Race of Kings--- Behold! rejoice, and sing, that the Time is come for the Law, which knows no Party, and will endure no Disloyalty, to govern us all by *Righteousness*; and for Religion, which dissuades from both, to rule in our Hearts, with more Knowledge, with more Love and *Charity*, the end of the Commandment. Behold saith the Lord (*Jer.* 33. 6.) *I will bring Health and Cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them Abundance of Peace and Truth-- Amen, so be it to GREAT-BRITTAİN.*

F I N I S.



P O S T S C R I P T.

WHat relates to the Ingenuity of *Retracting* an Error, and the Pleas of *Constancy*, being Subjects unhandled by any Author, that I know of, I have all along promised my self the larger Measure of my Reader's Candor to Imperfections. I must always be so far in the Argument, as both to wish some able *Genius* may be excited to cultivate it farther to this, and other Purposes; and be ready to make a *Recantation* of any Error, Mistake, or Inadvertency herein committed, when any Body shall do me the Favour to shew it me.

E R R A T A.

P.	L.	instead of	read
1.	11.	<i>the</i>	<i>that</i>
7.	32.	<i>the</i>	<i>a</i>
9.	7.	<i>a</i>	<i>dele</i>
13.	8.	<i>s</i>	<i>con.</i>
14.	35.	<i>by</i>	<i>dele.</i>
24.	30.	<i>is</i>	<i>are.</i>
57.	37.		<i>Eighthly.</i>
58.	12.		<i>Ninthly.</i>
63.	40.		<i>Tenthly.</i>
66.	1.	<i>accused.</i>	<i>convicted.</i>

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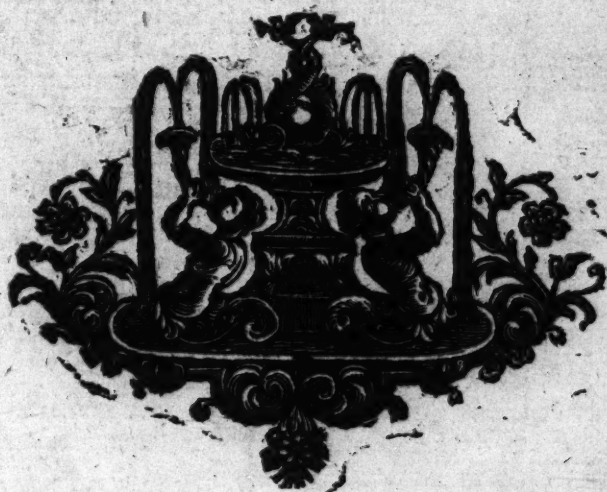
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